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THE GUENEGAUD THEATRE 1673-1680
AND THE MACHINE PLAYS OF THOMAS CORNEILLE

by

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Two Volumes

Volume One

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SUMMARY

The Guénégaud theatre was in operation in Paris from 1673 to 1680 - from shortly after Molière's death to the foundation of the Comédie-Française. Although the first home of both the Paris Opéra and the Comédie-Française, the Guénégaud has attracted little attention, and no previous study has been devoted entirely to it, despite the fact that the Guénégaud account books are preserved in the Archives of the Comédie-Française. These have provided a wealth of information on the day-to-day running of a seventeenth-century French theatre and the preparation of productions. What is more, a study of the records of ticket sales they contain has been found to make possible not only an analysis of the tastes and, to a certain extent, the composition of the Guénégaud's audiences, but also a reconstruction of the theatre building itself.

In 1673, the Guénégaud company was in a highly vulnerable position. Just seven years later, however, it was so powerful and in possession of a theatre so well-equipped, that it was the ancient and prestigious Hôtel de Bourgogne company that was closed down and its actors transferred to the Guénégaud to form the Comédie-Française. This thesis, therefore, further examines how the Guénégaud company succeeded in effecting this reversal in their fortunes.

One major contributing factor was the Guénégaud company's series of machine plays by Thomas Corneille and Donneau De Visé. Concentrating on Circé, the first and most successful of these, as a single representative production, this thesis, is also, therefore, a study of the adaptation and final demise of a genre where music was of primary importance in the face of implacable opposition from Lully, desirous of protecting his privilège on the production of operas.

Finally, the thesis attempts to show that if there is any justification in the tradition by which the Comédie-Française is known as the 'Maison de Molière', this is entirely due to the Guénégaud company's success in ensuring their own survival and, in so doing, maintaining and transmitting their inheritance from Molière's troupe, and that this same survival was in no small part thanks to the machine plays of Thomas Corneille.

FOREWORD

Although the vagaries of the spelling of seventeenth-century French are frequently of considerable interest, in this work I have presumed to follow the example of W.D. Howarth, Sylvie Chevalley, Christian Delmas and others in attempting to make all quotations conform to modern usage. My reasons for doing so are as follows:

- Firstly, this thesis is primarily a study in theatre history. There is no question of establishing the text of any of the plays considered, which are studied mainly in terms of the information they provide as to contemporary staging conditions and practices. It would, therefore, seem irrelevant, and possibly, confusing for non-specialist readers to over-emphasize the orthographical aspect, especially given that in the period under consideration spelling could vary enormously from author to author and printer to printer. This could pose a particular problem in the context of this study in that in the major manuscript source consulted, the account books of the Guénégaud company, entries were made by a number of individuals using an astonishing variety of different spellings and abbreviations, and that included are many mémoires submitted by often semi-illiterate tradespeople.

- Secondly, works have been quoted from a wide variety of sources: for example, the manuscript account books of the Guénégaud company, contemporary documents published by other authors, seventeenth-century editions of plays and modern critical editions of seventeenth-century plays. In certain of these the spelling has already been modernized, whereas in others it obviously has not. It would seem incongruous, therefore, to quote Molière's L'Ecole des femmes from the modernized

Pléiade edition edited by Georges Couton,¹ but to quote Montfleury's L'Ambigu comique, performed at the Guénégaud in the same season, with its archaisms intact; or to quote the 'Mémoire de ce qu'il faut faire au Jeu de Paume des Marais', as reproduced in its original form by Deierkauf-Holsboer,² but to quote the 'Devis des ouvrages de peinture qu'il convient faire pour Messieurs les comédiens de Monseigneur le duc d'Orléans', as modernized by Christian Delmas.³

¹ Molière, Oeuvres complètes, edited by Georges Couton, 2 vols (Paris, 1971).

² S. Wilma Deierkauf-Holsboer, Le Théâtre du Marais, 2 vols (Paris, 1954-8), I, 194-8.

³ Christian Delmas, 'Sur un décor de Dom Juan', Cahiers de littérature du XVII^e siècle, 5 (1983), pp. 44-73 (pp. 46-7).

ABBREVIATIONS

The manuscript account books or registres of the Guénégaud company are referred to as R followed by a roman numeral indicating the season to which reference is made, as follows:

1673-4	.....	R I
1674-5	.....	R II
1675-6	.....	R III
1676-7	.....	R IV
1677-8	.....	R V
1678-9	.....	R VI
1679-80	.....	R VII
1680-1	.....	R VIII

Other titles are given in full only in the bibliography and first footnote reference, being cited in short-title form in the text and subsequent footnotes.

INTRODUCTION

The Guénégaud occupies a crucial position in the history of the seventeenth-century French theatre. It is generally known, however, for only two things: adapted from its original jeu de paume form in 1670 to house the newly-formed Académie de Musique, it was there that the first public performance of an opera in French was given with the production of Pomone by Perrin and Cambert on 3 March 1671; and some nine years later, on 25 August 1680, it went on to become the first home of the Comédie-Française. It is a sign of the neglect to which the Guénégaud has been abandoned that, although Molière died in 1673 and the Comédie-Française was not founded until 1680, the latter is traditionally known as the 'Maison de Molière', as if the intervening seven years had never existed. The Guénégaud provides the vital link, being in operation throughout the whole of this period - from the absorption of the Marais company by the survivors of Molière's troupe to the absorption of the Hôtel de Bourgogne troupe into the Guénégaud company to form the Comédie-Française. It is on these years that the present study will concentrate, and it will be shown that it is with some justification that the latter theatre is known as the 'Maison de Molière', in that his company was the sole corporate survivor of these two mergers.

The lack of attention paid to the Guénégaud is particularly surprising in that it is only partially due to a lack of information. If there are in existence no plans of the theatre building, the full set of the company's account books are preserved in the Archives of the Comédie-Française. These have been referred to by generations of theatre historians, but apparently never before has a systematic examination of them been undertaken. In fact, they provide a highly detailed account of the day-to-day running of a seventeenth-century theatre. What is more, a

study of the records of ticket sales they contain has permitted not only an analysis of the tastes and to a certain extent the composition of the Guénégaud's audience, but also an attempted reconstruction of the theatre auditorium.

Molière died on 17 February 1673. Shortly afterwards, four actors left the troupe which had borne his name to join that of the Hôtel de Bourgogne. The composer Lully, who, inspired by the success of Perrin's Académie de Musique, had succeeded in obtaining from him the monopoly on the production of operas, further prevailed so as to have himself awarded the use of Molière's Palais-Royal theatre. Thus, in the space of a few short months, the remaining members of Molière's troupe found themselves without their leader and chief playwright, four of their number, and a theatre in which to perform. Indeed, so hopeless appeared their situation that there was even talk of the troupe being disbanded and its members dispersed to the two rival Hôtel de Bourgogne and Marais companies. Instead, in 1673, it was the Marais theatre which was closed down and the members of its company united with those remaining from Molière's troupe, now installed at the Guénégaud; and, just seven years later, this Troupe du Roi à l'Hôtel Guénégaud was so strong and in possession of a theatre so well-equipped, that when the call came to have a single company of French actors operating in Paris, it was the ancient and prestigious Hôtel de Bourgogne theatre which was closed down, and the members of its company transferred to the Guénégaud to form the Comédie-Française.¹ The ways in which this turn about in the fortunes of the Guénégaud company was effected, and, specifically, the part played in it by the machine plays of Thomas Corneille, will also be examined here. Clearly, it can only have come about as the result of a highly competitive attitude vis-à-vis their rivals, good market research

¹ Sylvie Chevalley, 'Les Derniers Jours de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne', *Revue d'histoire du théâtre*, 17 (1965), pp. 404-7 (pp. 406-7).

and extreme effort. Such an attitude was not, however, the sole monopoly of the Guénégaud company. Lully, having been awarded the monopoly on the production of operas, immediately took steps to protect it by having restrictions placed on the number of singers and musicians that could be employed by theatrical companies on their productions. He was ruthless in ensuring that these were applied, and that anything which might constitute a threat to his Academy was eliminated.

Running concurrently with the taste for classical purity and restraint for which the French seventeenth century is most widely known was, for the greater part of the period, a passion for spectacle. This found its first expression in ballet and other court entertainments, and was one of the chief factors ensuring the success of opera in France. The influence of these entertainments soon spread to the public domain. Molière combined music and dancing with his own speciality to create the genre of comédie-ballet. Devised for the Court, these were given for the general public in a somewhat reduced form at their author's Paris theatre. Opera, too, was made available to a wider, if still somewhat élitist, clientèle by Perrin and later Lully. The most popular manifestation of this passion for spectacle took the form of elaborate machine plays on mythological subjects containing frequent changes of décor and apparitions of the gods, which were the speciality of the Marais company. Music was, for the most part, an element of considerable importance in these, as it was in Molière's comédie-ballets. A serious blow was struck, therefore, to the troupes which performed them, or, indeed, any troupe desirous of introducing spectacle into its performances, by the imposition of the restrictions on the musical content of stage productions made in Lully's favour.

The remaining members of Molière's troupe were further disadvantaged by the fact that they had been famed for their performance

of comedy, and during their last seasons had concentrated to a great extent on the production of their leader's own works. As no other comic playwright would have seemed capable of stepping into Molière's shoes, and as the production of the Marais's machine plays had been rendered impossible, it must have seemed that the new company had little to set against the tragedies, in which its rivals at the Hôtel de Bourgogne specialized, and the operas of Lully.

The Guénégaud company did, however, possess certain assets on which to capitalize. If no new playwright was capable of replacing Molière, it did have the latter's comedies in its repertory. Above all, it was in possession of a theatre purpose built for the presentation of spectacular operatic productions, together with all the scenery and machines belonging not only to the Guénégaud, but also the Palais-Royal and the Marais. Given these assets, and the public predilection for spectacle, the Guénégaud company determined to channel its energies into the production of new machine plays. These initially would be interspersed with Molière's comedies and other works from the repertories of the combined troupes, as well as certain other tragic and comic premières. This decision was only arrived at, however, after a considerable degree of dissension within the troupe, no doubt provoked by the seeming impossibility of producing machine plays which would conform with the terms of the ordonnance issued in Lully's favour.

Among the Marais company's greatest successes in the genre of the machine play had been three provided by the young editor of Le Mercure galant, Jean Donneau De Visé. Those presented at the Guénégaud were the work of the journalist's friend and associate, Thomas Corneille, although De Visé, by his own report, collaborated on certain of them.²

² Le Mercure galant, edited by Jean Donneau De Visé (Paris, 1672-4; 1677 - May 1710), (January 1710), pp. 270-94.

More importantly, De Visé contributed to their success by means of the publicity he provided for them in Le Mercure galant. At the time of his first association with the Guénégaud company, Thomas Corneille was fifty-two years old, and had a long and distinguished career behind him, during which he had produced works numbering amongst the greatest popular successes of the century, notably Timocrate, Camma, Ariane and Le Baron d'Albikrac. He had, however, never before attempted a work with a pronounced spectacular element and if he did so at the Guénégaud, it was no doubt at De Visé's instigation.

The main problem facing Thomas and De Visé was that since the earliest days of the genre, music had been considered almost indispensable to the machine play. Initially serving merely to cover the noise of the scene changes and apparitions, it had later come to be seen as a vital attraction in its own right. Thanks to Lully's intervention this musical content now had to be severely restricted. One of the main objectives of this study will be, therefore, to demonstrate how Thomas and De Visé attempted to continue to satisfy the public's taste for spectacle in the face of these restrictions: initially seeming to ignore them, then attempting by a variety of devices to integrate music and dancing into performances within the limitations laid down, and, finally, seeking out new subjects providing scope for spectacle in a largely non-musical context.

This difficulty was not the monopoly of Thomas Corneille and the Guénégaud company. Other groups were aware of the public's predilection for spectacle as a force to be exploited. These included the puppeteers who operated under the name of 'Les Pygmées', the band of acrobats known as the 'Troupe de la Force de l'Amour et de la Magie', the Italian actors with whom the Guénégaud company shared their theatre, and Henri Guichard, who attempted to set up a veritable Académie des Spectacles.

All of these found themselves constrained by the terms of the ordonnances issued in Lully's favour, for he, apparently wishing to hold an effective monopoly on spectacular as well as on musical productions, used the restrictions on stage music and the favour he enjoyed at Court to eliminate or curb his rivals. These alternative attempts to provide the public with spectacle, together with the manner of their suppression, will be examined here in order to place the endeavours of the Guénégaud company in context.

Thomas Corneille produced four new machine plays for the Guénégaud: Circé, L'Inconnu, Le Triomphe des dames and La Devineresse.³ A further work, La Pierre philosopale was presented shortly after the formation of the Comédie-Française. Considerably less critical attention has been paid to these than is the case for other of Thomas's works, despite the fact that they were all, with the exception of La Pierre philosopale, extremely successful. Indeed, Circé even rivals Timocrate as one of the greatest popular successes of the century. The custom in criticism of Thomas's works has been to categorize them according to supposed phases in his career into comedies from Spanish models, comedies in the style of Molière, Cornelian and Racinian tragedies.⁴ In this way, the machine plays in the three studies devoted to them, are grouped with Thomas's two operas Psyché and Bellerophon, and considered

³ Le Festin de pierre, adapted from Molière's Dom Juan might be considered a fifth, but cannot be deemed an original composition (see Aaron Schaffer, 'Thomas Corneille's reworking of Molière's Dom Juan', Modern Philology, 19 (1921-2), pp. 163-75). Furthermore, although requiring a different stage setting for each act, it does not exploit to the same extent the other spectacular and musical elements associated with the machine play proper.

⁴ See for example, Gustave Reynier, Thomas Corneille: sa vie et son théâtre (Paris, 1892).

almost as reduced scale operatic works.⁵ This is particularly ironic given the necessity Thomas faced of reducing the musical content of his works. At no time have Thomas's machine plays been considered in terms of the evolution of the specific genre to which they belonged.⁶ Nor has attention been paid to the vital rôle they played in revitalizing the fortunes of the Guénégaud company.

The Guénégaud troupe's account books contain entries relating to preparations for the production of the first three of Thomas's machine plays. In each case these entries resemble each other to a great extent, and it has been decided for the purposes of this study to concentrate on Circé as a single representative production, especially as the presentation of Thomas's third machine play has been studied by Sylvie Chevalley in great detail in her article 'La Production du Triomphe des dames'.⁷ L'Inconnu, Le Triomphe des dames, La Devineresse, and, to a lesser extent, La Pierre philosophale are considered, however, in terms of their position in the evolution and eventual decline of the machine play, of which they were possibly the last examples in this period.

The machine plays Thomas Corneille produced for the Guénégaud enjoyed for the most part considerable success, attracting large audiences to the theatre over extended periods. This provided the company with a degree of financial security, so that as the production

⁵ Jules Carlez, 'Pierre et Thomas Corneille librettistes', Mémoire de l'Académie nationale des arts, sciences et belles-lettres de Caen (1881), pp. 137-74; 'Les Opéra^s, tragédie et comédie lyriques, les pièces à machines', in Reynier, Thomas Corneille, pp. 266-319; Sylvie Spycket, 'Thomas Corneille et la musique', Bulletin de la Société d'étude du XVII^e siècle, 21-2 (1954), pp. 442-55.

⁶ Christian Delmas in his many works on machine plays, collected in Mythologie et mythe dans le théâtre français, 1650-1676 (Geneva, 1985), stops short with the works of Donneau De Visé produced by the Marais company, and at no time goes on to consider Thomas Corneille's contribution to the genre.

⁷ In Mélanges historiques et littéraires sur le XVII^e siècle offerts à Georges Mongrédien par ses amis (Paris, 1974), pp. 377-84.

of machine plays became increasingly difficult and their popularity, apparently, began to wane, they were able to turn their attention to the tragedy which was then returning to the forefront of fashion, and, by a highly competitive production policy both of premières and revivals, successfully challenge and ultimately surpass their rivals at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. Thus, if there is any justification in the use of the term 'la Maison de Molière' to describe the Comédie-Française, it is entirely due to the achievement of the Guénégaud company in maintaining and transmitting the inheritance of the latter's troupe, and that the Guénégaud company survived so as to be able to achieve this feat is in no little part thanks to the the machine plays of Thomas Corneille.

CHAPTER ONE - FOUNDING

MOLIERE'S DEATH AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Under the heading Friday 17 February 1673, La Grange entered the following account in the Registre he had kept of the activities of Molière's company since joining it soon after its return to Paris in 1658:

- Ce même jour, après la comédie, sur les dix heures du soir, Monsieur de Molière mourut dans sa maison, rue de Richelieu, ayant joué le rôle dudit Malade imaginaire, fort incommodé d'un rhume et fluxion sur la poitrine qui lui causait une grande toux, de sorte que dans les grands efforts qu'il fit pour cracher, il se rompit une veine dans le corps et ne vécut pas demi-heure après ladite veine rompue.¹

As a mark of respect, Molière's company ceased to perform until after his funeral. It would, in fact, have been difficult to continue with Le Malade imaginaire, which had only been given four times, since understudies do not seem to have had a place in the theatre of the time. Nor would it have been any easier to introduce another play at short notice, since Molière had written large parts for himself in the majority of his own works, and plays by other writers had been virtually eliminated from his company's repertory.² One can easily envisage, therefore, the confusion caused in the troupe by this sudden, tragic

¹ Charles Varlet de La Grange, Registre (1659-1685), edited by Bert Edward and Grace Philputt Young, 2 vols (Paris, 1947), (I, 142); all references to La Grange's Registre are to this edition unless otherwise specified.

² During the 1672-3 season only two works by dramatists other than Molière had been presented: Jean Donneau De Visé's Les Maris infidèles and the anonymous petite pièce, Le Procureur dupé (Sylvie Chevalley, 'Le "Registre d'Hubert" 1672-1673: étude critique', Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre, 25 (1973), pp. 145-95 (pp. 156-7)).

loss of the man who had been at once its leading actor, playwright, director and manager.

The company returned to the stage on 24 February 1673, two days after its leader's burial in the Saint Joseph cemetery.³ Its first presentation was Le Misanthrope with Michel Baron in the title rôle.⁴ This was followed on 28 February by La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas and Les Fâcheux. After this brief respite, and no doubt bowing to popular demand, Le Malade imaginaire was brought back on 3 March, Molière being replaced by La Thorillière.⁵ There were important financial reasons necessitating the return of a play with such tragic associations. The expense involved in the production of Le Malade imaginaire had been high, since its intermèdes called for the hiring of numerous supernumerary musicians, dancers and other assistants, many of whom had to be costumed at the company's expense.⁶ The Palais-Royal troupe was, as a result, heavily in debt, and could only begin to raise the money to pay off its creditors by performing its new play. Le Malade imaginaire continued to enjoy great popular success throughout the remainder of the century, possibly as a result of morbid curiosity aroused by the circumstances of Molière's death.

Nevertheless, the company was still in debt by the time of the close of the theatrical season at Easter, despite the fact that Le Malade imaginaire had been performed nine times to quite satisfactory

³ Charles Varlet de La Grange, Registre (1658-1685), edited by Edouard Thierry (Paris, 1876), p. xvii.

⁴ The members of Molière's company were at this time: Geneviève Béjart, De Brie and his wife, La Grange and his wife, Du Croisy, La Thorillière, Mlle Molière, Hubert, Baron, and Beauval and his wife (Georges Mongrédien and Jean Robert, Les Comédiens français du XVII^e siècle: dictionnaire biographique (Paris, 1981), p. 213).

⁵ La Grange, Registre, ed. Thierry, p. xvii.

⁶ La Grange, Registre, I, 144.

houses.⁷ The Easter break was the time when actors were traditionally free to move from company to company if they so wished. In 1673, four actors took this opportunity to leave the Palais-Royal troupe to join that of the Hôtel de Bourgogne: La Thorillière, Baron and the Beauval couple.⁸ Although such transfers were common, this particular one was extraordinary in that ever since it had first been established the Hôtel de Bourgogne company had had a fixed number of shareholder members or sociétaires in line with the amount of its royal subsidy, with 1,000 livres going to each of the ten members and 2,000 livres to the company officer known as the Orateur.⁹ Exceptionally, in 1673, this number was suddenly increased by four. The admission of these additional members was no doubt motivated by a desire on the part of the Hôtel de Bourgogne company to remove unwelcome competition, and, by tempting away actors from the Palais-Royal, prevent their rivals from ever taking to the stage again. That this departure came as a profound shock to the remaining members of Molière's company is clearly stated by Samuel Chappuzeau in the manuscript version of his account of contemporary theatrical conditions, Le Théâtre français: 'La Thorillière, Baron, Beauval et sa femme furent reçus à l'Hôtel de Bourgogne avec grande joie, et causèrent au Palais-Royal une très grande surprise'.¹⁰ This comment was omitted from the published version of 1674.¹¹

Posterity has treated these four actors very badly, and they have been roundly criticized for deserting a sinking ship and failing to

⁷ Chevalley, 'Etude critique', p. 163.

⁸ La Grange, Registre, I, 147.

⁹ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, II, 185-6.

¹⁰ Alexis Vesselovsky, 'Le Manuscrit de Chappuzeau', Le Moliériste, 3 (1881), pp. 81-7 (p. 84).

¹¹ Samuel Chappuzeau, Le Théâtre français, edited by Georges Monval (Paris, 1876).

remain true to the memory of their former friend and colleague. This move has also been seen as evidence of a certain amount of rivalry within Molière's company. In Deierkauf-Holsboer's view, when Molière died this was a disaster for his troupe not only from an artistic point of view but also administratively. Molière had been the undisputed leader of his company; his death left a number of sociétaires all with equal rights, from amongst whom a new leader had to be chosen. She conjectures that La Grange and La Thorillière disputed the leadership, and that when La Grange won, La Thorillière refused to remain in the same troupe, and so departed to the Hôtel de Bourgogne taking his future son-in-law, Baron, and his supporters, the Beauvals, with him.¹² Some credence is given to this theory by the note La Grange made in his Registre on La Thorillière's death in June 1680: 'M. de La Thorillière est mort à l'Hôtel de Bourgogne ce qui a donné lieu à la jonction des deux troupes au mois d'août ci-après' (I, 237). This would seem to indicate that there remained some lingering animosity between the two men as late as 1680, and that this was one of the main obstacles to the formation of the Comédie-Française.

This view of the events of Easter 1673 in terms of a power struggle presupposes that it was the practice for a seventeenth-century theatre company to have a designated leader. Generally, this leader is identified with the Orateur, the company officer who at the end of each day's performance would address the audience to announce the forthcoming presentation. This question has recently been examined by William Brooks in his article 'Chappuzeau and the Orateur - a question of accuracy',¹³ where he concludes that the term was not used equally by all Parisian companies, and that Chappuzeau is imprecise in Le Théâtre français: 'The

¹² Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, II, 185.

¹³ Modern Language Review, 81 (April 1986), pp. 305-17.

Hôtel de Bourgogne used the term orateur.... The Théâtre du Marais also used the term.... But in applying it generally Chappuzeau displays the same inattention to detail which characterizes other parts of his account, for it was probably not used by Molière's troupe, and certainly not by its successor, that of La Grange at the Hôtel Guénégaud' (p. 314). He bases his latter assertion on an entry in Richelet's dictionary of 1680:

Celui qui a fait Le Théâtre français ... a écrit que les comédiens appelaient orateur celui qui annonce les pièces, fait les harangues et compose les affiches. Les comédiens ne sont pas du sentiment de cet auteur, au moins Rosimond qui est l'un de ces Messieurs qui parle le mieux, me l'a assuré positivement. Ils disent, c'est La Grange qui annonce et fait les compliments, et jamais c'est La Grange qui est l'orateur.¹⁴

Such a categorical assertion by Rosimond, a member of the Guénégaud company, may, however, have been intended to distance himself and the troupe to which he belonged from a term which had ceased merely to describe the functions of one of the company's officers and had come to designate its leader.

Brooks himself, when referring to the Guénégaud company as 'that of La Grange at the Hôtel Guénégaud', falls into the trap of assuming that every troupe must have had a leader. This may well have been the case earlier in the century and in the provinces, but a new egalitarianism appears to have been the rule among Parisian companies in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Indeed, if Molière was the undisputed leader of the troupe performing at the Palais-Royal and which was popularly known by his name, the multiplicity of his talents makes this understandable. Given that he was writing and probably, therefore,

¹⁴ Pierre Richelet, Dictionnaire français contenant les mots et les choses, 2 vols (Geneva, 1680), II, 95; in Brooks, 'Chappuzeau', p. 312.

also directing the vast majority of their plays, as well as appearing in them, it is not surprising that he should have had a major say in any company decisions. Even so, the organizational structure of the troupe was the same as for the other Parisian companies, consisting of a group of shareholders or sociétaires. The only time Molière was treated advantageously occurred in 1661, when he asked for and was awarded two shares instead of one. Even so, this privilege was shortlived, for the troupe specified that the extra share should be 'pour lui ou pour sa femme s'il se mariait'.¹⁵ Molière married Armande Béjart on 14 February 1662,¹⁶ and the supplementary share then passed to her. The only other known example of a company member being financially favoured was at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, where, as we have seen, the Orateur received a greater share of the royal subsidy. It should be stressed, however, that even there the Orateur would have received only a single share in the company's takings.

In fact, the concept of the actor-manager as it was to be developed in subsequent centuries, and in the light of which the seventeenth century has to a certain extent been misinterpreted, would have been quite alien to the majority of actors in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. This is clearly stated by Chappuzeau in Le Théâtre français: 'Il n'y a point de gens qui aiment plus la monarchie dans le monde que les comédiens, qui y trouvent mieux leur compte, et qui témoignent plus de passion pour sa gloire: mais ils ne la peuvent souffrir entre eux, ils ne veulent point de maître particulier, et l'ombre seule leur en fait peur' (p. 97). He reiterates his point elsewhere in the same work: 'Mais si le séjour des républiques n'est pas le fait des comédiens, le gouvernement républicain leur plaît fort entre

¹⁵ La Grange, Registre, I, 33.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 43.

eux, ils n'admettent point de supérieur, le nom seul les blesse, ils veulent tous être égaux, et se nomment camarades' (p. 102). Little wonder, then, that Rosimond should have rejected the term orateur in association with the company to which he belonged, if it had come to imply 'leader'.

The person who performed the functions of orateur, providing the troupe's direct contact with the public by means of both oral and written publicity, was, however, an extremely important member of the company, and it is not surprising that in many eyes he should have been seen to be pre-eminent. Chappuzeau, in fact, presents the complexities of this position rather more accurately than Brooks would have us believe, when he writes:

Pour ce qui est de l'Orateur, je le tire du rang des officiers, et comme il représente l'état en portant la parole pour tout le corps, il serait peu-être de l'honneur de la troupe qu'il en fût nommé le chef, puisque je lui ai donné la face d'une république, et que je croirais lui faire tort de l'appeler anarchie. Mais comme cet orateur ne doit le plus souvent l'honneur de sa fonction qu'au pur hasard, sans que précisément le mérite y contribue, et que d'ailleurs il n'a pas dans la troupe plus de pouvoir ni d'avantage qu'un autre, ainsi que les comédiens de Paris me l'ont assuré, je ne le nommerai simplement que l'Orateur, et je dirai en peu de mots quelles sont ses fonctions. (p. 139)

Le Théâtre français when it first appeared in 1674, was dedicated to 'Son Excellence Monseigneur Jean Baptiste Truchi ... Président et Chef de Conseil de Finances de Son Altesse Royale de Savoie'. Monval, in his edition of the work, notes, however, that the manuscript version dated 1673 preserved in the Moscow public library bears the inscription: 'Pour la Troupe du Roi à qui cet ouvrage est particulièrement dévoué par son humble et très obéissant serviteur Chappuzeau' (p. xiv). The Troupe du Roi to which Chappuzeau refers was, almost certainly, the company occupying the Guénégaud theatre, the company occupying the Hôtel de Bourgogne being known as the Troupe Royale. Evidence to this effect is

provided by the record in the Guénégaud account books or Registres of a payment of 55 livres 10 sols to Chappuzeau on 21 September 1673 (R I, 35). This gratification, whether in recognition of the proposed dedication or for the general eulogy of the Guénégaud company provided in Le Théâtre français, suggests that the view Chappuzeau puts forward was one of which the actors approved. Brooks, in his article 'Chappuzeau and the Orateur', is almost certainly mistaken, therefore, when he assumes the 'Troupe du Roi' of the dedication of Le Théâtre français to be the Hôtel de Bourgogne company (p. 312).

In the first years of his company's activity in Paris, Molière himself performed the duties of Orateur. In 1664, however, this rôle was taken over by La Grange, presumably to relieve Molière of one of his many burdens.¹⁷ Nevertheless, on certain special occasions it was still the leader, Molière, who addressed the public on his company's behalf.¹⁸ Given the significance of the position of Orateur, it might be inferred that Molière was, by allowing La Grange to second him, designating the actor as his successor in authority. Certainly Chappuzeau seems to make such a connection between the two men when eulogizing La Grange as the Orateur of the Guénégaud company:

Quoique sa taille ne passe guère la médiocre, c'est une taille bien prise, un air libre et dégagé, et sans l'ouïr parler, sa personne plaît beaucoup. Il passe avec justice pour très bon acteur, soit pour le sérieux, soit pour le comique, et il n'y a point de rôle qu'il n'exécute très bien. Comme il a beaucoup de feu, et de cette honnête hardiesse nécessaire à l'Orateur, il y a du plaisir à l'écouter, quand il vient faire le compliment; et celui dont il sut régaler l'assemblée à l'ouverture du Théâtre de la Troupe du Roi, était dans la dernière justesse. Ce qu'il avait bien imaginé fut prononcé avec une merveilleuse grâce, et je ne puis enfin dire de lui que ce que j'entends dire à tout le monde, qu'il est très poli, et dans ses discours, et dans toutes ses actions. Mais il n'a pas seulement succédé à

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁸ Brooks, 'Chappuzeau', p. 311.

Molière dans la fonction de l'Orateur, il lui a succédé aussi dans le soin et le zèle qu'il avait pour les intérêts communs, et pour toutes les affaires de la troupe, ayant tout ensemble de l'intelligence et du crédit. (p. 166)

In fact, contrary to Chappuzeau's belief, La Grange was not universally admired by his contemporaries as we will see.

If we accept that there was a power-struggle between La Grange and La Thorillière and that this was the cause of the latter actor's departure to the Hôtel de Bourgogne, it is hard to see on what grounds he could have hoped to compete against La Grange, unless, having succeeded Molière as 'le malade imaginaire', he believed that he had a right to succeed him in his other functions also. La Grange even had the right of ancienneté on his side, since he had joined Molière in 1659, and La Thorillière only in 1662.¹⁹ But, given that theatre companies of the time were apparently run according to egalitarian principles, it would seem far more likely that there was no power struggle, and that a simple desire for security was the cause of La Thorillière's move. Seeing little future for the Palais-Royal troupe following Molière's death, it would no doubt have appeared wiser to transfer to the Hôtel de Bourgogne. Edouard Thierry is mistaken, however, when he asserts that more immediate personal ambition also played a part in this transfer, alleging that La Thorillière went to the Hôtel de Bourgogne in order to replace Floridor as Orateur, who had died some two years previously.²⁰ In fact, Floridor was replaced by Hauteroche, who remained Orateur of the Hôtel de Bourgogne company until the formation of the Comédie-Française in 1680.²¹

¹⁹ Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique, p. 213.

²⁰ La Grange, Registre, ed. Thierry, p. xviii.

²¹ Brooks, 'Chappuzeau', p. 311.

La Thorillièrè was followed to the Hôtel de Bourgogne by Baron and the Beauval couple. These had all joined the Palais-Royal troupe only three years before in 1670,²² and, with the exception of Mlle La Grange, who had been associated with the company for many years before becoming a member,²³ were by far the newest members. The last member to join before them had been Hubert in 1664.²⁴ Apparently, these three 'deserters' did not share the same devotion to Molière, his work and the troupe in general as other, longer-serving members of the company. Despite the fact that Molière had reputedly behaved as an adoptive father towards him,²⁵ Baron in going to the Hôtel de Bourgogne was very much returning home, his father having been a member of that company from 1637 to 1663, and his mother from 1642 to 1662.²⁶ Moreover, there were soon to be family ties linking Baron with La Thorillièrè, whose daughter he married in 1675.²⁷

Thus, the Palais-Royal troupe found itself in the space of a few months minus its leader and four of its best actors. Could it not be that any subsequent animosity came about not on account of a power-struggle between La Grange and La Thorillièrè, but as the result of this departure which might so easily have been seen as a desertion? La Grange's bitterness appears not only in his comment on La Thorillièrè's death, but also in his testimony given in 1679, at the time of the Guénégaud company's legal dispute with one of its actresses, Mlle

²² Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique, p. 213.

²³ Ibid., p. 122.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 213.

²⁵ Jean-Léonor Gallois de Grimarest, La Vie de Monsieur de Molière (Paris, 1705; reprinted Paris, 1930), p. 35.

²⁶ Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique, p. 210.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 20.

Auzillon. There, both he and Hubert attempted to minimize the loss they had incurred by belittling the acting ability of those who had left. When asked: 's'il n'est pas vrai que les acteurs principaux de la troupe de Molière après son décès passèrent dans la troupe de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne?', La Grange replied: 'non parce que les meilleurs acteurs sont demeurés avec la veuve dudit Sieur Molière', and Hubert added: 'que le fonds des meilleurs acteurs a toujours subsisté'.²⁸ As Deierkauf-Holsboer points out, this is manifestly unjust, for if Beauval was almost certainly a minor talent, admitted to companies largely out of consideration for his wife, she and La Thorillière were forces to be reckoned with, and Baron is widely recognised to have been the greatest actor of his age.²⁹ Such a view is confirmed by Chappuzeau in Le Théâtre français, who writes that the actors who left 'se retrouvant en possession des premiers rôles de beaucoup de pièces, ceux qui restaient furent hors d'état de continuer' (p. 127). Indeed, in 1679, Mlle Auzillon went so far as to suggest that these four were the only actors who were permitted to join the Hôtel de Bourgogne company, the rest having been rejected both by it and by the Marais troupe.³⁰ This is, itself, somewhat unfair, however, for if De Brie, Geneviève Béjart and Mlle La Grange were not particularly gifted, La Grange, Du Croisy, Hubert, Mlle Molière and Mlle De Brie were, almost certainly, extremely talented actors.

Another factor to be taken into consideration is the character of La Grange. We have already seen Chappuzeau's eulogy of the Guénégaud Orateur. Following this line, La Grange is generally represented as a

²⁸ Georges Monval, 'L'Affaire Auzillon', Le Moliériste, 8 (May-June 1886), pp. 53-9, 73-85 (p. 75).

²⁹ Marais, II, 186.

³⁰ Monval, 'Affaire Auzillon', p. 75.

noble figure, heroically struggling to keep alive his beloved master's work, taking over from Mlle Molière whose natural 'nonchalance' made her unequal to the task.³¹ This view is challenged by Deierkauf-Holsboer in her somewhat partial account of the last days of the Marais theatre, where she writes of the 'intentions malveillantes' of La Grange, whom she holds personally responsible for the downfall of the Marais. She describes La Grange as someone determined to seize and retain power at all costs, attempting to assure his own troupe's supremacy in any merger which might be brought about, adding that as a result, 'les comédiens du Marais ont de la répugnance à collaborer avec La Grange'.³²

More surprising is the fact that this 'répugnance' was apparently shared by fellow members of the Palais-Royal troupe. In 1679, Mlle Auzillon questioned Mlle Molière and Mlle De Brie on the negotiations that had taken place prior to the renting of the Guénégaud theatre from the Marquis de Sourdéac and the Sieur de Champeron. She asked:

S'il n'est pas vrai que ladite damoiselle de Molière, De Brie et Du Croisy furent prendre ledit sieur de Champeron au mois d'avril 1673 pour aller à Sèves dans la maison du sieur de Sourdéac traiter dudit lieu, ce qu'ils firent;

...
S'il n'est pas vrai que lesdites damoiselles de Molière, De Brie et Du Croisy célèrent leur voyage au sieur de La Grange, l'un des comédiens, ne souhaitant pas que lui et sa femme fussent de la troupe....³³

Unfortunately, we do not have the replies to these questions. We do, however, know that such a trip took place, for Thierry in his Documents sur 'Le Malade imaginaire' includes a reference to the payment of 3 livres 'à Madame de La Vigne pour un carrosse pris le mardi 26^e avril

³¹ See, for example, Jean Valmy-Baisse, Naissance et vie de la Comédie-Française (Paris, 1945), pp. 92-4.

³² Marais, II, 187-96.

³³ Monval, 'Affaire Auzillon', pp. 55-6.

pour mener Mesdemoiselles de Molière, De Brie et Du Croisy chez M. de Champeron', and the following entry records a payment to 'Mlle Du Croisy pour un voyage fait à Sève chez M. de Sourdéac'.³⁴ But if the details of these journeys were recorded in the company's official papers, they can hardly have been concealed from La Grange. Ernest Thoinan, on the other hand, suggests that if difficulties arose in negotiations at this time, it was entirely due to the high-handed attitude of Mlle Molière herself.³⁵

As if these problems were not sufficient, a still more serious blow was struck against the remainder of Molière's troupe when, on 28 April 1673, the 'jouissance gratuite' of its Palais-Royal theatre was bestowed on the Italian-born court composer Jean-Baptiste Lully for the presentation of his operas.³⁶ Thus, the company, already deprived of its leader and four of its actors, suddenly found itself without a theatre in which to perform. We can only suppose that the authorities believed that the situation the troupe found itself in as a result of Molière's death and the departure of four actors to the Hôtel de Bourgogne could not easily be remedied, and that the company was no longer in a position to be able to perform. This no doubt appeared the ideal time to put into

³⁴ Edouard Thierry, Documents sur 'Le Malade imaginaire' (Paris, 1880), pp. 305-6. Thierry maintains that the Mlle Du Croisy in question was the fifteen year old daughter of the Palais-Royal actor, later herself a member of the Guénégaud company. In fact, it is more likely to have been his wife. Mlle Du Croisy had been a member of Molière's troupe from 1659 to 1665 (Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique, p. 213), and, although retired from the stage, remained associated with the Guénégaud company, her name occasionally appearing in its Registres (e.g. on 1 December 1675, R III, 99). This is all the more likely in that her daughter, Angélique Du Croisy, is always referred to in the Guénégaud Registres as Mlle Angélique. Mlle Du Croisy was probably acting for her husband in this matter, who had himself been to visit Champeron only shortly before (Thierry, Documents, p. 305).

³⁵ Ernest Thoinan, 'Molière et Lully', Le Moliériste, 8 (1886), pp. 309-14, 366-8 (p. 367).

³⁶ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, II, 187.

practice certain theories evolved by Louis XIV in conjunction with his Minister of Finance, Colbert. These concerned the centralization of the arts so that they might be more easily controlled and more effectively employed in the service of the monarchy, and resulted in the creation of the royal academies of dance (1661), inscriptions (1663), painting and sculpture (1664), and architecture (1671).³⁷ Another was the Académie Royale de Musique controlling the production of operas in French, the foundation of which will be discussed in more detail later. Having recently succeeded in establishing the Académie Royale de Musique as an effective tool under the direction of Lully, it is not inconceivable that Louis XIV wished to extend the system to include the other dramatic genres. If so, it would have seemed necessary to reduce the number of companies performing in French in the capital to two, in order that one might specialize in comedy and the other in tragedy. The Hôtel de Bourgogne would have appeared the obvious choice as the home of an academy of tragedy, leaving, after Molière's death and the departure of four of his actors, the Marais as the main contender as the home of an academy of comedy. Chappuzeau in Le Théâtre français states quite clearly that there was a deliberate royal intention to reduce the number of troupes operating in Paris:

... le Roi ordonna que les comédiens n'occupa^{er}ient plus la salle du Palais-Royal, et qu'il n'y aurait plus que deux troupes françaises dans Paris. Les premiers gentilhommes de la Chambre eurent l'ordre de ménager les choses dans l'équité, et de faire en sorte qu'une partie de la troupe du Palais-Royal s'étant unie de son chef à l'Hôtel de Bourgogne, l'autre fut jointe au Marais de l'aveu du Roi. (p. 127)

³⁷ Robert M. Isherwood, 'The Centralization of music in the reign of Louis XIV', French Historical Studies 6 (1969-70), pp. 157-71 (pp. 157-8).

In fact, the matter was not so easily settled, as Chappuzeau explains: 'les intérêts des comédiens étant difficiles à démêler par des particuliers qui ne peuvent entrer dans ce détail' (p. 128); and negotiations to allow for the transfer of the remainder of Molière's troupe to the Marais theatre appear to have broken down. In 1679, as we have seen, Mlle Auzillon suggested that these actors were, in fact, refused admission to both the Hôtel de Bourgogne and Marais companies. This is perfectly possible, for, once all threat of competition from the Palais-Royal company had been removed, it would not have been in the interests of the other two troupes to receive its actors, other than those who had great drawing power with the public, since the original members' shares of the takings would be reduced by any increase in numbers. This view of events is categorically contradicted, however, by La Grange, who stated in 1679 in reply to Mlle Auzillon that 'il n'a jamais été question que la troupe dudit sieur de Molière entrât à l'Hôtel de Bourgogne ou au Marais'.³⁸

Lully was awarded the use of the Palais-Royal for his Académie Royale de Musique on 28 April 1673, thereby making it impossible for the remainder of Molière's company to continue their performances. This raises the question of why Lully should have required this theatre when there were at that time two purpose built opera houses in Paris, one of which was Lully's own.

ACADEMIE ROYALE DE MUSIQUE

The first opera house to be established in Paris was constructed in a former tennis court, the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille, situated in the rue des Fossés de Nesle, later the rue Mazarine, opposite the rue Guénégaud, causing it to be known in later years as the Théâtre or Hôtel

³⁸ Monval, 'Affaire Auzillon', p. 175.

Guénégaud. In 1673, this building was in the possession of the Marquis de Sourdéac and the Sieur de Champeron, a couple of highly disreputable adventurers. These had been the associates of the Abbé Perrin, a poet and librettist, to whom a privilège giving the right to found an Académie de Musique possessing the monopoly on the production of operas in France had been awarded on 28 June 1670.³⁹ Supposedly acting on Perrin's behalf, Sourdéac and Champeron leased the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille from its owner, Maximilien de Laffemas on 8 October 1670, and proceeded to convert the tennis court into an opera house.⁴⁰ It was there that the first public performance of an opera in French was given on 3 March 1671, with the presentation of Pomone, libretto by Perrin and music by Robert Cambert.⁴¹ This production was enormously successful, but, unfortunately, Perrin was not able to profit from its success. His financial state had been precarious for some time, and he had already been imprisoned for debt in 1659.⁴² At the Academy, Sourdéac and Champeron who had taken control of the box-office, ensured that the greater part of the takings disappeared into their own pockets, with the result that Perrin was imprisoned again in June 1671. In an attempt to recoup some of his losses, Perrin sold an interest in his Academy to

³⁹ Charles Nutter and Ernest Thoinan, Les Origines de l'Opéra français (Paris, 1886), pp. 97-100.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 141-3. Details of this conversion and of the subsequent disposition of the theatre are given in my chapter on the design of the Guénégaud.

⁴¹ Robert M. Isherwood, Music in the Service of the King: France in the Seventeenth Century (Ithaca, 1973), p. 176.

⁴² Ibid., p. 174.

Henri Guichard and Jean Granouillet de la Sablières in November 1671.⁴³ Sourdéac and Champeron claimed that this sale was illegal in that Perrin had already made over his monopoly to them. The result was that no-one knew who was the rightful owner of the privilège. It was amid this confusion that a second opera was produced at the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille: Les Peines et les plaisirs de l'amour, again with music by Cambert, but with a libretto by Gabriel Gilbert. This was as successful as its predecessor.⁴⁴

Lully, who at this time was employed on the production of ballets for the French Court, would appear to have been interested by the popular success of the two works presented, for, observing the disorder into which the Académie de Musique had fallen, he took advantage of it by visiting Perrin in prison and persuading him to sell him his privilège. It is unlikely that Lully would have taken this step without royal support, and, indeed, a letter he wrote to Colbert would seem to indicate that he was acting at that Minister's instigation.⁴⁵ It is not surprising, therefore, that on 13 March 1672, an ordonnance was issued transferring the privilège for the Académie de Musique, henceforth to be

⁴³ Guichard, Gentilhomme Ordinaire de Monsieur, Duc d'Orléans (Nutter and Thoinan, Origines, p. 198), and as from 19 September 1673, Intendant des Bâtiments et Jardins de Monsieur (Arthur Pougin, Les Vrais Créateurs de l'Opéra français (Paris, 1881), p. 185), was himself a librettist. In collaboration with Sablières, Intendant de la Musique du Duc d'Orléans (Madeleine Jurgens and Elizabeth Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans de recherches sur Molière, sur sa famille et sur les comédiens de sa troupe (Paris, 1963), p. 510), he produced two court operas at the instigation of his master: Les Amours de Diane et d'Endimion, performed at Versailles on 3 November 1671, and a reworked version of the above entitled Le Triomphe de l'amour, performed before the King in February 1672 (Lionel de La Laurencie, Les Créateurs de l'Opéra français (Paris, 1930), p. 188).

⁴⁴ Nutter and Thoinan, Origines, pp. 210-11.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

known as the Académie Royale de Musique, to Lully.⁴⁶ By this action, Sourdéac and Champeron suddenly found themselves in possession of a theatre and an opera company the use of which was forbidden to them, since Lully's privilège contained a clause banning the singing of 'aucune pièce entière en musique soit en vers français, ou autres langues, sans la permission dudit sieur Lully, à peine de dix mille livres d'amendes et de confiscation des théâtres, machines, décorations, habits et autres choses'.⁴⁷ Obviously, not to comply would have been to play straight into Lully's hands.

The months and years that followed were filled with complaints and legal objections made by people who felt that they had had a share in Perrin's privilège and that they had been dispossessed, notably Sourdéac, Champeron, Sablières and Guichard; as well as by others, including Molière, who felt that their livelihoods were threatened. Lully was at a great disadvantage here, for, although he was secure in royal favour and had a new privilège made out in his name, he had never had an opera in either French or Italian performed in Paris or elsewhere, and, what is more, had no theatre at his disposal in which to present such a work.⁴⁸ Clearly, any collaboration with Sourdéac and Champeron was out of the question, and the latter pair no doubt considered their possession of an opera house to be their trump card.

Nine months before Molière's death, on 3 June 1672, Lully wrote to Colbert to ask him to arrange premises: 'J'espère, Monseigneur, que par votre bonté le Roi m'accordera la Salle du Louvre, dans laquelle je

⁴⁶ Ariane Ducrot, 'Lully créateur de troupe', XVII^e Siècle, 98-9 (1973), pp. 91-107 (p. 91).

⁴⁷ Nutter and Thoinan, Origines, p. 239.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 272.

ferais incessamment travailler'.⁴⁹ This theatre, known as the Grande Salle du Louvre, had formerly been used for royal entertainments. It was there that most of the ballets given during the reign of Louis XIII were performed. It, however, had been employed only once during the reign of Louis XIV, for the Ballet de l'amour malade in 1657;⁵⁰ but when Lully requested the use of it, the King replied that the Louvre was inappropriate for public performances.⁵¹

On 12 August 1672, therefore, Lully rented the Jeu de Paume de Becquet, sometimes also known as the Jeu de Paume de Bel-Air, on the rue de Vaugirard, with the intention of converting it into a theatre.⁵² This building had, in fact, earlier been in the possession of Perrin to whom it was leased on 13 May 1670, and who had originally intended to establish his Académie de Musique there. Work on the construction of his theatre was well under way, and the dress rehearsal of *Pomone* had already taken place, when he was evicted by order of the Lieutenant de Police, possibly because he had neglected to obtain police authorization for his project.⁵³ It was following this mishap that Perrin transferred his Academy to the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille on the rue Mazarine. Evidently, Lully did not neglect to complete the formalities, or else was safeguarded by the favour in which he stood at court, for he was not troubled by the police.

The same day that Lully signed the lease for the Becquet, 12 August 1672, a new royal ordonnance was issued definitively closing

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 252.

⁵⁰ Marie-Françoise Christout, *Le Ballet de cour de Louis XIV, 1643-1672: mises en scène* (Paris, 1967), pp. 19-20.

⁵¹ Isherwood, *Music*, p. 184.

⁵² Nutter and Thoinan, *Origines*, p. 272.

⁵³ Ibid., pp. 130-40.

down Sourdéac and Champeron's opera house in the rue Mazarine, and, what is more, forbidding them from renting it to any company of actors then operating in Paris:

Sa Majesté ayant accordé au sieur Baptiste Lully, surintendant de la musique de sa chambre, le privilège des ouvrages de théâtre en musique, et voulant lui donner le moyen de s'en bien acquitter et lever tous les empêchements qui pourraient être formés à l'exécution de ce qui est en cela des intentions de Sa Majesté, tant pour ses divertissements que pour ceux du public, Sa Majesté défend très expressement à toutes les troupes de comédiens français et étrangers qui représentent à présent dans Paris de louer la salle qui a servi jusqu'à présent aux représentations desdits ouvrages en musique, ni d'y représenter aucunes comédies sous quelque prétexte que ce soit....⁵⁴

This harsh action, effectively cutting Sourdéac and Champeron off from their livelihood by making it impossible for them to capitalize on their investment in any way whatsoever, would appear a punitive measure in the light of their obvious refusal to co-operate with Lully. Sourdéac and Champeron were thus left with a white elephant on their hands, especially as they had originally leased the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille for five years, of which not yet two had run.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 274. The question remains open of whether Sourdéac and Champeron would have been allowed to lease their theatre to a provincial company desirous of establishing itself in the capital.

⁵⁵ Pougin, Vrais Créateurs, p. 108.

Lully leased the Becquet for eight months for 1,800 livres plus a 500 livres gratification.⁵⁶ It might seem surprising that Lully should take out such a short lease, but Nutter and Thoinan point out that this was the period remaining of that theatrical season and conjecture that Lully expected to be able to get the better of his adversaries in that time.⁵⁷ It is stated in the lease that Lully will establish his Académie Royale de Musique at the Becquet and that he will 'pour ce sujet faire faire tout le théâtre, loges, machines, et autres choses qu'il jugera à propos..., même faire les démolitions qu'il conviendra, à la charge par lui de faire rétablir le tout à la fin de ses huit mois en pareil état qu'il lui sera baillé en entrant'.⁵⁸ This clause specifying that properties should be handed back in the precise state in which they had been found, regardless of any construction work that had been carried out in the interim, is a feature of the majority of extant

⁵⁶ When Perrin first leased the Becquet he paid 800 livres per annum. The Bouteille was considerably more expensive at 2,400 livres (Nutter and Thoinan, *Origines*, p. 273). This was, in fact, the most usual yearly rent for a theatre, being the amount paid for the Hôtel de Bourgogne, for the Marais in 1647 and by Molière for the Jeu de Paume de la Croix Noire in 1644. It was, however, occasionally exceeded, as in 1639 when Montdory and Le Noir agreed to pay 3,000 livres for the Marais, but more often rather less was paid: 1,400 livres for the Jeu de Paume de la Fontaine in 1641, 1,900 livres by Molière for the Jeu de Paume des Mestayers in 1643, as little as 400 livres for an unnamed jeu de paume in 1660, and 1,600 livres for the Marais in 1671. These figures are taken from leases reproduced by S. Wilma Deierkauf-Holsboer in *Le Théâtre de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne*, 2 vols (Paris, 1968-70), II, 179-80, 194-5 and Marais, I, 156, 177, 191 and II, 285, 322; and Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, *Cent ans*, pp. 229, 258. Not surprisingly, the higher prices were generally charged for those buildings that had already been adapted into theatres, exceptions being the Croix Noire, the Becquet in 1672 though not in 1670, and the Bouteille. The Becquet is particularly interesting in that it shows how demand could dramatically increase market values. On the other hand, the cost of the lease for the Marais practically halved between 1639 and 1671, probably due to the decrease in popularity of the area in which it was situated and from which it took its name.

⁵⁷ *Origines*, p. 274.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 273.

leases on jeu de paume buildings, including those of the Illustre Théâtre company for the Mestayers and the Croix Noire.⁵⁹ When it became necessary for a troupe to change premises, they would simply demolish their stage, boxes, amphithéâtre and the like, transport the wood and iron to their new theatre and have new ones constructed to fit, as, for example, when Molière's company obtained permission to remove boxes from the Petit-Bourbon, which were then used to construct those for the Palais-Royal.⁶⁰

The Italian stage and scene designer, Carlo Vigarani, was the person selected by Lully to design his theatre as well as the décors for his first presentation. A contract was passed between them on 23 August 1672 according to which the former helped finance the venture in return for a share of the profits.⁶¹ According to both Adolphe Jullien and A. de Boislisle, the opera house was actually designed and built by Guichard, the machines alone being the work of Vigarani.⁶² This, however, would appear highly unlikely given that Guichard was one of the people to whom Perrin had sold a share in his privilège and who, therefore, felt himself to have been dispossessed by Lully; especially as Guichard instigated a long legal battle against Lully, in the course

⁵⁹ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, pp. 229, 258.

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 353-4.

⁶¹ Nutter and Thoinan, Origines, p. 281.

⁶² Adolphe Jullien, 'Les Salles de l'Opéra de 1671 à 1873', Revue de la France (November 1873), pp. 440-9 (p. 440); Arthur Michel de Boislisle, 'Les Débuts de l'Opéra français à Paris', Mémoires de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Ile de France, 2 (1875), pp. 172-6 (p. 10).

of which not only the two protagonists but also Mlle Molière were violently attacked.⁶³

The new Académie Royale de Musique opened on 15 November 1672 with Les Fêtes de l'Amour et de Bacchus. The libretto of this work was almost entirely by Molière, consisting of sections taken from the various court entertainments on which Molière and Lully had collaborated, with minor additions from Quinault, Benserade and the Président de Périgny.⁶⁴ This was followed, after Molière's death, by Cadmus et Hermione, with a libretto by Quinault, first performed on 27 April 1673.⁶⁵ It is a mark of Lully's success that the première of this work was attended by the King and other members of the Royal Family, as is recorded in the Gazette de France:

Le 27 avril 1673, Sa Majesté, accompagnée de Monsieur, de Mademoiselle et de Mademoiselle d'Orléans, alla au faubourg Saint Germain prendre le divertissement de l'Opéra, à l'Académie Royale de Musique établie par le sieur Baptiste Lully, si célèbre en cet art; et la compagnie sortit extraordinairement satisfaite de ce superbe spectacle, où la tragédie de Cadmus et Hermione, fort bel ouvrage du sieur Quinault, est représentée avec des machines et des décorations surprenantes dont on doit l'invention et la conduite au sieur Vigarani, gentilhomme modenois.⁶⁶

The following day, 28 April 1673, the King gave permission for Lully to use the Palais-Royal for the presentation of his operas, thereby evicting the remainder of Molière's troupe.⁶⁷ This was not, however,

⁶³ This culminated, in November 1674, in Guichard attempting to induce Sébastien Aubry, the husband of Geneviève Béjart and brother-in-law of Mlle Molière, to poison Lully by offering him tobacco mixed with arsenic during a dinner at the house shared by the Aubry couple and Armande (Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 666).

⁶⁴ Isherwood, Music, p. 186.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 189.

⁶⁶ In Nutter and Thoinan, Origines, p. 289.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 291.

simply the result of the royal pleasure in the previous day's performance, for once again Lully called upon his powerful patron, Colbert, to arrange matters for him, this time employing an intermediary in the person of Charles Perrault. The latter recalled in his Mémoires that:

Après que Lully eut obtenu son don <du privilège>, il me pria, conjointement avec Monsieur Vigarani, qui faisait les machines et les décorations du théâtre, de prier pour eux Monsieur Colbert de demander au Roi la grande salle de comédie du Palais-Royal pour y représenter leur opéra. J'eus l'honneur de faire pour eux cette proposition à Monsieur Colbert, qui m'écouta fort favorablement.... Il en parla au Roi, qui fut bien aise d'accorder cette grâce à Lully. Ensuite, ils demandèrent mille écus pour rétablir les lieux et les mettre en état; cette somme leur fut accordée et je puis dire qu'ils m'en eurent encore une partie de l'obligation.⁶⁸

Why should Lully have wanted to take possession of the Palais-Royal theatre, rather than just renewing the lease on his own Jeu de Paume de Becquet? One reason may have been, as Nutter and Thoinan suggest, that the Becquet theatre was only ever conceived as a stop-gap, and so was not designed or constructed with any long-term plans in mind. Another may have been that in the seventeenth century the rue de Vaugirard was on the very fringes of Paris. Lully might have hoped to attract a larger and more influential audience by moving to a more central position, for, as we will see, a theatre's location within the capital could play a decisive rôle in the enterprise's success or failure. Finally, any theatre which Lully rented privately he had to pay for, whereas one whose use was granted by royal favour was free of charge.

⁶⁸ Charles Perrault, Mémoires de ma vie, edited by Paul Bonnefon (Paris, 1909), in Gabriel Rouchès, Inventaire des lettres et papiers manuscrits de Gaspard, Carlo et Lodovico Vigarani conservé aux Archives de l'Etat de Modène (1634-1684) (Paris, 1913), p. 189.

'LA PASSION DU SPECTACLE'

A further motivation would have been provided by the Palais-Royal theatre itself. In 1636, Cardinal Richelieu had a room in his palace transformed into a theatre. This theatre could only contain some 600 spectators and, judging it too small, in 1637 the Cardinal ordered the architect Jacques Lemercier to build a new one. Construction lasted over three years, and the theatre - known as the Palais Cardinal - opened on 14 January 1641 with the production of Mirame by Jean Desmarets, later sieur de Saint-Sorlin.⁶⁹ By 1661, however, when Molière and his troupe received permission to perform in what was now known as the Palais-Royal, the theatre had fallen into such disrepair that, according to La Grange in his Registre: 'il y avait trois poutres de la charpenterie pourries et étayées et la moitié de la salle découverte et en ruine' (I, 26), and the company were forced to perform beneath 'une grande toile bleue suspendue avec des cordages' (I, 124-5). It continued thus for some ten years, until in January 1671 it was decided that the theatre should be renovated.

One of the major trends during the course of the seventeenth century was the development of what Jacques Scherer identifies as 'la passion du spectacle' among the theatre-going public.⁷⁰ First finding expression in court entertainments, notably the ballet (it was for such productions that Richelieu had his great theatre in the Palais Cardinal constructed), then passing to the public domain, spectacle was one of the major factors contributing to the success of opera in France. It also had a profound effect on the other dramatic genres, resulting in the creation of what was in effect a completely new genre - the machine

⁶⁹ S. Wilma Deierkauf-Holsboer, L'Histoire de la mise en scène dans le théâtre français à Paris de 1600 à 1673 (Paris, 1960), p. 29.

⁷⁰ La Dramaturgie classique en France (Paris, 1950), pp. 160-71.

play. This was a work, usually a tragedy and usually on a mythological subject, in which the text was largely subordinated to the spectacular effects it ~~el~~llicted by means of a pronounced supernatural element, and in which music and dance played an important part. In fact, the only real difference between the machine play and opera was that in the machine play music tended to appear rather more intermittently, frequently at the end of acts, in conjunction with an elaborate special effect, the descent of a god in his palace for example. Two masterpieces of the genre are Pierre Corneille's Andromède and La Toison d'or, both of which were first performed by the Marais company, although the creation of La Toison d'Or actually took place in the Normandy home of the Marquis de Sourdéac who had designed and helped to execute the machines.⁷¹

The Marais troupe specialized in machine plays, performing thirteen between 1647 and 1672:

DATE	TITLE	AUTHOR
1647	<u>Circé</u>	Balthasar de Beaujoyeux
1648	<u>Andromède et Persée: la délivrance</u>	-
"	<u>La Descente d'Orphée aux enfers</u>	Chapoton
"	<u>Ulysse dans l'île de Circé</u>	Claude Boyer
1649	<u>La Naissance d'Hercule</u>	Jean Rotrou
1655	<u>Andromède</u>	Pierre Corneille
"	<u>La Comédie sans titre</u>	Philippe Quinault
1661	<u>La Toison d'or</u>	Pierre Corneille
1665	<u>Les Amours de Jupiter et de Sémélé</u>	Claude Boyer
1669	<u>La Fête de Vénus</u>	Claude Boyer
1670	<u>Les Amours de Vénus et d'Adonis</u>	Jean Donneau De Visé
1671	<u>Les Amours du Soleil</u>	Jean Donneau De Visé
1672	<u>Le Mariage de Bacchus et d'Ariane</u>	Jean Donneau De Visé 72

⁷¹ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, I, 127-31.

⁷² These dates are taken from Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, II, 219-20, with the exception of those for the machine plays of De Visé which are taken from Pierre Mèlèse, Un Homme de lettres au temps du grand roi: Donneau De Visé (Paris, 1936), pp. 81-91.

The genre was so popular that even that bastion of the tragic art, the Hôtel de Bourgogne, attempted to enter into competition with the Marais. The machine plays presented at the former theatre were Le Grand Astianax in November 1656, the success of which was so great that it was revived the following winter. It was followed early in 1657 by Gabriel Gilbert's Les Amours de Diane et d'Endimion. This production was not so successful, however, largely due to its having been performed in competition with Thomas Corneille's Timocrate at the Marais.⁷³ According to Deierkauf-Holsboer, its failure discouraged the Hôtel de Bourgogne from continuing to produce machine plays, but this view is contradicted by Henry Carrington Lancaster, who notes that Sallebray's Le Jugement de Paris involving over twenty flights was revived there in 1657.⁷⁴

If the machine play was spectacular entertainment for popular consumption in that it was performed in the public theatre, with the exception of the occasional French or Italian opera, the main source of spectacle at Court was the ballet in which King and courtiers also performed. As part of his contribution to court entertainments, Molière combined this with his own speciality to produce the hitherto unknown genre of comédie-ballet, in which music and dancing appeared most often as divertissements or intermèdes between the acts of the comedy. Unable to allow himself the luxury of producing work solely for the delight of the Court, however, Molière also gave his comédie-ballets on a somewhat reduced scale in his Palais-Royal theatre. The favourable reception these productions received, together with the recent success of Pomone and the continued popularity of the machine plays at the Marais appear to have encouraged Molière to develop the spectacular elements in his

⁷³ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 82-3.

⁷⁴ A History of French Dramatic Literature in the Seventeenth Century, 9 vols (Baltimore, 1929-42), II, 240.

work. Thus, in 1671, he and his troupe agreed that they should completely renovate their theatre so as to make it suitable for the public presentation of Psyché which had been first given at court in January 1671. As La Grange recorded in his Registre:

Il est à remarquer que le dimanche 15 mars de la présente année 1671, avant que de fermer le théâtre, la troupe a résolu de faire rétablir les dedans de la salle qui avaient été faits à la hâte lors de l'établissement et à la légère, et que par délibération il a été conclu de refaire tout le théâtre, particulièrement la charpente, et le rendre propre pour des machines; de raccommoder toutes les loges et amphithéâtre, bancs et balcons, tant pour ce qui regarde les ouvrages de menuiserie que de tapisseries et ornements et commodités, plus de faire un grand plafond qui règne par toute la salle, qui jusqu'au dit jour 15^e mars n'avait été couverte que d'une grande toile bleue suspendue avec des cordages. De plus, il a été résolu de faire peindre ledit plafond, loges, amphithéâtre et généralement tout ce qui concerne la décoration de ladite salle, où l'on a augmenté un troisième rang de loges qui n'y était point ci-devant. (I, 124-5)⁷⁵

Work began on 18 March 1671 and was completed on 15 April. The cost 'en bois de menuiserie, charpenterie, serrureries, peintures, toiles, clous, cordages, ustensiles, journées d'ouvriers, et généralement toutes choses nécessaires' came to 1,989 livres 10 sols. Of this, the Italian troupe with whom Molière and his company shared the usage of the Palais-Royal paid half.⁷⁶

Thus, when Lully dispossessed the remainder of Molière's troupe of its theatre shortly after its leader's death, he gained not only a theatre which had been purpose-built with spectacular presentations in

⁷⁵ Certain features of the decoration of this new ceiling are known from a contract passed between Lully and Vigarani on the one hand, and the painters Simon and Rambourg on the other, for the re-decoration of the Palais-Royal, in which it is stated that as part of the new ceiling design will be painted 'deux amours embrassés à la place des satires' and 'deux cornes d'abondance avec le Soleil au-dessus à la place des dauphins' (Jean Cordey, 'Lully installe l'Opéra dans le théâtre de Molière', Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français (1950), pp. 137-42 (p. 140)).

⁷⁶ La Grange, Registre, I, 125.

mind, but one that only two years before had been completely refurbished and equipped for the very kind of spectacular production the Académie Royale de Musique had been established to present and which was also well-located. As such, it would have been infinitely preferable to his own hastily constructed Becquet theatre, and only equalled by his rivals' opera house in the rue Mazarine.

Nevertheless, Lully and Vigarani still felt obliged to make improvements to the facilities at the Palais-Royal before it could be opened as an opera house. Lully's plans are outlined in a letter to Colbert in which he requested royal permission 'd'exhausser la partie de la salle du Palais-Royal qui est au-dessus du théâtre', asked 'que l'on change des poutres qui sont cassées, avant que d'y pouvoir faire travailler, à cause qu'il serait impossible d'y faire aucunes machines avec sûreté', and, finally, requested permission to remove from '<les> deux côtés de l'ouverture du théâtre deux piliers de pierre qui ne sont d'aucun service et qui au contraire embarrassent extrêmement l'espace des décorations', intending to use the stone from them 'pour l'exhaussement susdit des murs du théâtre'. He adds that, in accordance with the usual practice, he must 'faire transporter la salle et les machines' from the Becquet to the Palais-Royal, concluding with some urgency of the Academy that 'son établissement ou sa ruine dépend entièrement d'une pièce nouvelle dans le Palais-Royal avant l'hiver'.⁷⁷ In addition to this work at the stage-end of the building, it is also believed that major alterations were made to the Palais-Royal auditorium

⁷⁷ Cordey, 'Lully installe l'Opéra', p. 138.

at this time.⁷⁸ The total cost of work carried out was 3,000 livres, which Lully and Vigarani received from the royal coffers.⁷⁹

One can only sympathize with the remaining members of Molière's troupe. In 1660, they had had their theatre in the Petit-Bourbon demolished about their ears, no doubt at the instigation of their enemies, for as La Grange notes of the Surintendant des Bâtiments du Roi in his Registre: 'la méchante intention de M. Ratabon était apparente' (I, 26). Given the Palais-Royal in recompense, which they found in an extremely dilapidated condition, they patched it up as best they could and performed there under difficult conditions for ten years. Then, when finally they decided that they could afford to capitalize on a new trend and refurbished and modernized their theatre accordingly, they were only able to enjoy it for two years. By taking this action they had made themselves the rivals of a ruthless opponent who proceeded to dispossess them of the thing which threatened him and arrogate it to his own use.

MOLIERE AND LULLY

The rivalry between Lully and Molière and his troupe was all the more bitter in that the composer and the dramatist had once been collaborators, working together for the King's pleasure on such works as Le Mariage forcé, La Princesse d'Elide, L'Amour médecin, Pastorale comique, Le Sicilien, George Dandin, Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Les Amants magnifiques, Le Bourgeois gentilhomme and Psyché.⁸⁰ This collaboration might well have continued with Molière acting as Lully's

⁷⁸ Thomas Edward Lawrenson, The French Stage and Playhouse in the XVIIth Century: a Study in the Advent of the Italian Order (New York, 1986; first published Manchester, 1957), p. 243.

⁷⁹ Comptes des bâtiments du Roi sous le règne de Louis XIV, edited by Jules Guiffrey (Paris, 1901), I, 746; in Rouchès, Inventaire, p. 190.

⁸⁰ Georges Mongrédien, 'Molière et Lully', XVII^e Siècle, 98-9 (1973), pp. 3-15 (pp. 6-8).

librettist at the Académie Royale de Musique but, apparently, for Lully's treachery. In a satire against Lully published in 1688, Bauderan de Sénécé has Molière describe the events of 1672 thus:

Le grand bruit que faisaient dans le monde les Opéra excitèrent ma crainte et réveillèrent ma cupidité, j'appréhendais que cette nouveauté ne fût désertier mon théâtre, et je me persuadai que si je pouvais m'en rendre le maître rien ne pourrait désormais me troubler dans la qualité que je prétendais m'attribuer d'arbitre des plaisirs et du bon goût de ce siècle galant où j'ai vécu. Comme j'avais besoin d'un musicien pour exécuter ce projet, je jetai les yeux sur Lully, et lui communiquai ma pensée, persuadé que j'étais que la liaison que nous avions depuis longtemps, en concourant ensemble aux plaisirs du Roi et le succès merveilleux qu'avait eu depuis peu de temps le charmant spectacle de *Psyché*, où tous deux nous avions eu notre part au plaisir et à la gloire, m'étaient des garants infailibles de notre future intelligence. Je m'en ouvris donc à lui, il applaudit mon dessein, il me promit une fidélité et même une subordination inviolables, nous fîmes une convention, nous réglâmes nos emplois et nos partages, et nous prîmes jour pour aller ensemble mettre la faux dans la moisson d'autrui en demandant au Roi le privilège de la représentation des Opéra.... Je dormis tranquillement sur la bonne foi de ce traité, quand Lully, plus éveillé que moi, partit de la main deux jours avant celui dont nous étions convenus. Il alla au Roi demander le privilège pour lui seul; il l'obtint à la faveur des belles couleurs qu'il sut donner à sa requête, même avec des conditions rigoureuses, qui me donnèrent beaucoup à courir pour conserver pendant ma vie quelques ornements à mon théâtre.⁸¹

Music was an integral part of both the machine play and the comédie-ballet. Indeed, from 1670 onwards, music appears to have played an increasingly important rôle in every type of theatrical presentation, with pieces being performed during the intervals as well as introduced into the plays themselves. Thus, Chappuzeau in *Le Théâtre français* of 1674, remarks of the members of the orchestra: 'Il est bon qu'ils sachent par coeur les deux derniers vers de l'acte, pour reprendre promptement la symphonie, sans attendre qu'on leur crie: "Jouez!" ce qui

⁸¹ Lettre de Clément Marot à M. de S*** touchant ce qui s'est passé à l'arrivée de Jean-Baptiste de Lully aux Champs-Élysées (Cologne, 1688), in Mongrédien, 'Molière et Lully', pp. 9-10.

arrive souvent' (p. 147). Confirmation of this trend is found in 1671, when at the same time as recording the company's decision to repair and modify their theatre, La Grange notes in his Registre that Molière's troupe had also decided 'd'avoir dorénavant à toutes sortes de représentations, tant simples que de machines, un concert de douze violons, ce qui n'a été exécuté qu'après la représentation de Psyché'. He adds that where music as part of the stage performance was concerned: 'Jusques ici les musiciens et musiciennes n'avaient point voulu paraître en public. Ils chantaient à la comédie dans des loges grillées et treillissées, mais on surmonta cet obstacle, et avec quelque légère dépense, on trouva des personnes qui chantèrent sur le théâtre comme des comédiens' (I, 125-6). That this increased use of music continued, is clearly indicated by W.L. Schwartz in his study of the 'Registre d'Hubert', the account book of Molière's troupe for the last season of its activity, where he analyzes the sums spent on music for each of that season's premières.⁸² Where revivals are concerned, Jules Bonnassies points out that during this season, very often more was spent on music than at a work's first performance.⁸³

Lully was obviously aware of this use of music at all types of theatrical production. Indeed, its popularity was no doubt one of the factors affecting his decision to attempt to acquire Perrin's privilège. Once he, himself, was in possession of the privilège, however, he appears to have regarded such theatrical music as a threat to his livelihood, and attempted to defend himself by having its use suppressed entirely. To that effect were included in the first draft of his privilège, the 'conditions rigoureuses' to which Sénécé has Molière

⁸² 'Molière's theater in 1672-3: light from Le Registre d'Hubert', PMLA, 56 (1941), pp. 395-427.

⁸³ La Musique à la Comédie-Française (Paris, 1874), p. 13.

refer in his Lettre: 'des défenses contre toutes personnes non-seulement de faire chanter aucune pièce entière en musique, mais même de faire aucunes représentations accompagnées de plus de deux airs et de deux instruments sans sa permission par écrit'.⁸⁴ This is clearly far removed from the orchestra of twelve instrumentalists that Molière's troupe had decided only the year before should accompany all their performances.

The above clause was not, however, included in the final draft of Lully's privilège of 14 March 1672. According to the various legal documents submitted against Lully by Sourdéac, Champeron, Sablières and Guichard preserved in the Archives of the Comédie-Française, Molière appealed on behalf of all three troupes of French actors then operating in Paris and had it removed.⁸⁵ As Sénécé has him say, he was obliged 'beaucoup à courir pour conserver pendant <s>a vie quelques ornements à <s>on théâtre'. Lully, apparently, was in too much of a hurry to protest, so that for the time being no limitation on the number of singers and instrumentalists that could be employed on a theatrical production was specified.

This state of affairs was not to continue long. When Lully leased the Becquet in August 1672, and a new ordonnance was issued stating that no troupe of actors might perform in the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille, it was also forbidden for them:

... de se servir dans leurs représentations de musiciens au-delà du nombre de six et de violons et joueurs d'instruments de musique au-delà du nombre de douze, comme aussi de prendre et recevoir de ce nombre aucuns des musiciens et violons qui auront été arrêtés par ledit Lully et qui auront joué deux fois sur le théâtre, sans le congé exprès et par écrit dudit Lully, ni se servir d'aucun des danseurs qui

⁸⁴ Nutter and Thoinan, Origines, pp. 234-5.

⁸⁵ Ibid., pp. 234-6.

reçoivent pension de Sa Majesté, le tout à peine de désobéissance.⁸⁶

Lully, who had himself poached two of Perrin's singers, clearly wanted to avoid a taste of his own medicine.

Nutter and Thoinan see in this ordonnance a compromise between the interests of both Molière and Lully. As far as Molière was concerned, six singers and twelve musicians was infinitely preferable to two 'airs' and two 'instruments', whereas Lully's honour was satisfied by some restriction having been made.⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the second part of the clause would serve to ensure the supremacy of the Opera by giving Lully the pick of French musical talent and leaving only the dregs for Molière and the other theatrical companies.

From the date of Lully having been awarded Perrin's privilège onwards, there appears to have been no contact between Molière and the composer. Indeed, Molière seems to have attempted to expunge all traces of Lully from his repertory. When La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas was first performed at Court in December 1671, it had introduced the Ballet des ballets, pieced together from earlier court entertainments and, therefore, full of music by Lully. When this work was given for the first time for the Parisian public, in July 1672, it preceded a revival of Le Mariage forcé, and Molière had had Lully's intermèdes for that play as well as his overture to La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas replaced with music by Marc-Antoine Charpentier, who was to go on to become the house composer of the Guénégaud theatre.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 274-5.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 276.

⁸⁸ H. Wiley Hitchcock, 'Marc-Antoine Charpentier and the Comédie-Française', Journal of the American Musicological Society, 24 (1971), pp. 255-81 (p. 256).

No doubt as a reaction to this revival, on 20 September 1672, a new royal decree was issued in Lully's favour stating that not only did Lully have complete proprietorship of the music he had written for Molière's comédie-ballets, but also a total monopoly on the dramatist's work as well. This would have had the effect of preventing Molière from performing the vast majority of the comédie-ballets in his repertory.⁸⁹ Molière appears to have largely ignored this ruling, however, for in the months that followed his company performed such works as Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas, and, notably, Psyché in a major revival and retaining Lully's music. This last must have been particularly galling for the composer in that it was introduced in direct and deliberate competition with his own Les Fêtes de l'Amour et de Bacchus which inaugurated the opening of the Becquet opera house.⁹⁰ Nevertheless, this revival was not undertaken without difficulty, for La Grange notes in his Registre that the additional expenses or frais extraordinaires of the production were unusually high due to their being obliged to replace a number of musicians who had gone 'ailleurs' (I, 139). This expenditure evidently proved worthwhile, for the revival was a great success, with thirty-one consecutive performances being given from 13 November to 22 January.⁹¹

The music for Molière's next and final creation, Le Malade imaginaire first performed on 10 February 1673, was provided by Charpentier. Richard Oliver expresses the view that this production was considerably interfered with by Lully, basing his conclusions on the fact that Charpentier's manuscripts include three versions of the score

⁸⁹ A. Richard Oliver, 'Molière's contribution to the lyric stage', Musical Quarterly, 33 (1947), pp. 350-64 (p. 359).

⁹⁰ Nutter and Thoinan, Origines, p. 286.

⁹¹ Chevalley, 'Etude critique', pp. 162-3.

with certain laconic annotations: 'Le Malade imaginaire avant les défenses', 'Ouverture du prologue du Malade imaginaire dans sa splendeur' and 'Le Malade imaginaire avec les défenses. Ouverture'.⁹² H.W. Hitchcock, in his catalogue of Charpentier's works, has, however, determined that it was the version described as 'dans sa splendeur' which was performed in 1673. This required six singers, and was not, therefore, in contravention of the terms of the ordonnance issued in Lully's favour. It was not until these terms had been made still more severe following Molière's death, that it became necessary for Charpentier to make modifications to his score for the revival of Le Malade imaginaire at the Guénégaud theatre in 1674.⁹³

Nevertheless, one can only imagine how the members of Molière's troupe must have felt when, following their leader's tragic death after only four performances of this last work, the 'jouissance gratuite' of their theatre was awarded to their most deadly rival. Nor did matters rest there, for the decision pertaining to the number of musicians that could be used in a theatrical performance made in Molière's favour was speedily revoked. On 30 April 1673, only days after Molière's death, a new ordonnance was issued forbidding companies to employ more than two singers and six musicians on any production.⁹⁴ This measure, which hit the Marais company as badly as it did that of the Palais-Royal, underlines the extent to which Lully and the Opera had ousted the other dramatic genres from royal favour.

⁹² Oliver, 'Molière's contribution', p. 360.

⁹³ Les Oeuvres de/The Works of Marc-Antoine Charpentier: catalogue raisonné (Paris, 1982), pp. 366-8. The third version of the score for Le Malade imaginaire was, according to Hitchcock, provided for a revival at Versailles in 1686.

⁹⁴ Nutter and Thoinan, Origines, p. 292.

NEGOTIATIONS

The months following Molière's death were filled with what can only be described as business trips made by the remaining members of his company to consult patrons and influential people at court and elsewhere. Chappuzeau writes of such consultations in Le Théâtre français: 'Aussi voit-on les comédiens s'approcher le plus qu'ils peuvent des Princes et des Grands Seigneurs, surtout de ceux qui les entretiennent dans l'esprit du Roi, et qui dans les occasions, savent les appuyer de leur crédit' (p. 107). Details of certain of these visits are given by Thierry in his Documents sur 'Le Malade imaginaire'. The following chart shows them as far as possible in chronological order:

BUSINESS TRIPS MADE BY THE REMAINING MEMBERS OF MOLIERE'S COMPANY
FEBRUARY TO JUNE 1673

DATE	WHO WENT	WHERE	WHO TO SEE	REASON
19 Feb	company	Saint-Germain	-	-
20 Feb	company	Saint-Germain	-	-
7 Apr	La Grange + Du Croisy + Hubert	Saint-Germain	-	-
16 Apr	La Grange + Hubert	Saint-Germain	-	-
-	company	Saint-Germain	-	-
-	Du Croisy	Saint-Germain	-	-
20 Apr	La Grange + Du Croisy	Saint-Germain	-	-
24 Apr	Du Croisy + Hubert	Saint-Germain	-	-
-	Du Croisy	-	Champeron	-
26 Apr	Mlles Molière + De Brie + Du Croisy	-	Champeron	-
-	Mlle Du Croisy	Sève	Sourdéac	-
-	La Grange	Saint-Germain	-	-
-	Du Croisy	-	M. Duché ⁹⁵	-
9 May	La Grange + Du Croisy	Saint-Cloud	-	-

⁹⁵ Antoine Duché, the Intendant des Menus Plaisirs du Roi was responsible for summoning troupes to perform at Court. See Charles Montjean, 'La Troupe de Molière à Saint-Germain-en-Laye au XVII^e siècle', Revue de l'Histoire de Versailles et de Seine-et-Oise (April-June 1936), pp. 146-61 (p. 159).

10 May	-	Saint-Cloud	Monsieur ⁹⁶	-
-	-	-	M. Fourcroy ⁹⁷	-
-	-	Saint-Germain	-	-
-	-	Marais	MM. Coursoisy + Dupin + D'Estriché ⁹⁸	-
-	D'Estriché + G. ⁹⁹	-	-	-
-	-	Saint-Germain	-	-
-	Du Croisy	Saint-Germain	-	-
14 May	Du Croisy	Sceaux	Colbert ¹⁰⁰	-
15 May	Du Croisy	Sceaux	Colbert	-
16 May	-	Saint-Cloud	Monsieur	'pour dire adieu'
20 May	La Grange ¹⁰¹	Saint-Germain	-	-
25 May	-	Sceaux	Colbert	-
29 May	-	Sceaux	Colbert	-
10 Jun	De Visé	Marais	-	-
"	-	-	La Reynie ¹⁰²	-
-	De Visé	-	-	-
15 Jun	-	Sceaux	Colbert	-
-	-	-	La Reynie	Mlle Auzillon
-	-	-	La Reynie	Mlle Auzillon
-	-	-	La Reynie	Mlle Auzillon
25 Jun	-	Sceaux	Colbert	Mlle Auzillon
-	-	-	La Reynie	Mlle Auzillon
-	-	-	La Reynie	'pour retirer

⁹⁶ When Molière's troupe returned from the provinces in 1658, it was placed under the protection of the King's brother, Philippe, Duc d'Orléans, and was known as the Troupe de Monsieur.

⁹⁷ M. Fourcroy, a celebrated lawyer, had been a close friend of Molière (Thierry, Documents, p. 316).

⁹⁸ M. Coursoisy has not been identified. The other two gentlemen were members of the Marais theatre company.

⁹⁹ G., here, has not been positively identified, but may refer to Mlle Guyot, an actress with the Marais company and, supposedly, d'Estriché's mistress (Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique, p. 109).

¹⁰⁰ Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619-83), Minister, Mazarin's Intendant and executor of his will, Conseiller d'Etat and Intendant des Finances in 1661, Surintendant des Arts et des Manufactures in 1664, Contrôleur Général des Finances in 1665, Secrétaire d'Etat de la Marine, du Commerce et de la Maison du Roi.

¹⁰¹ In the documents, 20 May is given as a Thursday, whereas it was, in fact, a Saturday. Thierry is of the opinion, therefore, that this trip took place on 20 April (Documents, p. 319). However, the expenses incurred by La Grange and Du Croisy for a trip to Saint-Germain on that date had already been paid.

¹⁰² Gabriel-Nicolas de La Reynie (1625-1709), Maître des Requêtes in 1661, Lieutenant Général de Police de Paris in 1667, Conseiller d'Etat Ordinaire in 1686, Sous-Doyen du conseil.

Bailli de Saint-Germain l'ordonnance'
'concernant
l'établissement'

These trips and possible reasons for them will be discussed as we examine the steps taken by the remaining members of Molière's company to recover from their seemingly impossible position.

Deprived of their leader and four of their number, the first reaction of the remaining members of Molière's troupe was to attempt to get back up to full performing strength. To this effect they took on Angélique Du Croisy, their colleague's fifteen year old daughter, to whom they gave a quarter share in the company.¹⁰³ According to Deierkauf-Holsboer, the troupe also hired at this time Mlle Aubry, née Geneviève Béjart, who had been a member of Molière's first company, the Illustre Théâtre some thirty years earlier.¹⁰⁴ Deierkauf-Holsboer is mistaken, however, for Geneviève Béjart had been a member of Molière's troupe for the whole of the intervening period, performing under her mother's maiden name of Mlle Hervé and only changing this upon her marriage in 1672.¹⁰⁵

Of more significance was the coup by which the company succeeded in further adding to their number by securing the services of Claude de La Rose known as Rosimond, one of the leading actors of the Marais theatre. It was intended that Rosimond should take over those parts performed by Molière. Deierkauf-Holsboer, in her history of the Marais, portrays this as an act of treachery on the part of La Grange, whom she describes as wilfully attacking a company that had done him no harm out of frustration at his own misfortunes (II, 187). She claims to be basing

103 The share system will be examined in my chapter on the administration of the Guénégaud theatre.

¹⁰⁴ Marais, II, 171-3.

¹⁰⁵ Mongrédien and Robert, *Dictionnaire biographique*, p. 18.

her interpretation on Chappuzeau, asserting that more attention should be paid to his account of the events of 1673 (II, 201). In fact, the innocence of the Marais company at this time is severely called into question by Chappuzeau in Le Théâtre français, who writes of the departure of the four actors from the Palais-Royal to the Hôtel de Bourgogne that, 'le Marais se remuait de son côté et, comme état voisin, songeait à profiter de cette rupture, le bruit courant alors, que les deux anciennes troupes travaillaient à abattre entièrement la troisième, qui ~~voulaient~~ se relever' (p. 127). This is reminiscent of the events of 1660, when, due to the demolition of the Petit Bourbon, Molière's troupe found itself in a similarly vulnerable position. On that occasion La Grange noted in his Registre: 'La troupe en butte à toutes ces bourrasques eut encore à se parer de la division que les autres comédiens de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne et du Marais voulurent semer entr'eux leur faisant diverses propositions pour en attirer les uns dans leur parti et les autres dans le leur' (I, 27).

DECLINE OF THE MARAIS

In fact, the Marais company, too, was fighting for its life at this time. Lully's restrictions on the number of singers and musicians that could be employed on a theatrical production made it impossible for them to perform the machine plays for which they were famous. What is more, the situation of their theatre in an area of Paris which was no longer fashionable made it difficult for them to attract audiences to any type of presentation. This is clearly stated by Chappuzeau in Le Théâtre français, where he writes of the Marais company:

Cette troupe n'avait qu'un désavantage, qui était celui du poste qu'elle avait choisi à une extrémité de Paris, et dans un endroit de rue fort incommode. Mais son mérite particulier, la faveur des auteurs qui l'appuyaient, et ses grandes pièces à machines surmontaient aisément le dégoût que l'éloignement du lieu pouvait donner au bourgeois,

surtout en hiver, et ayant le bel ordre qu'on a apporté pour tenir les rues bien éclairées jusqu'à minuit, et nettes par tout et de boue et de filous. (p. 122)

The improvements in street cleaning and lighting to which Chappuzeau refers were introduced by the Lieutenant de Police, La Reynie, and were financed by a tax commonly known as 'les boues et les lanternes', to which all householders were liable.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, it remained to be seen whether the crowds would continue to flock to so isolated a place, however clean, once the Marais company was prevented from presenting its highly popular machine plays.

Furthermore, a certain amount of dissension within the Marais troupe had led to the departure of several of their better-known actors and actresses to the provinces and elsewhere. This, too, is attested to by Chappuzeau:

Il est arrivé de temps en temps de petites révolutions dans cette troupe, comme dans celle du Palais-Royal; et toujours causées par quelques mécontentements des particuliers, ou par quelques intérêts nouveaux, chacun en ce monde allant à son but, et se mettant peu à peine du bien du prochain.

D'ailleurs nous aimons tout naturellement le changement, et la diversité plaît, quoique nous ne trouvions pas en tous lieux les mêmes avantages. Il y a eu de bons comédiens qui ont quitté le Marais, où ils étaient estimés, sans nulle nécessité, et de gaieté de coeur, le poste de Paris leur plaisant moins alors que la liberté de la campagne. (pp. 122-3)

In fact, the number of actors and actresses to leave was considerable as is shown by the following chart:

ACTORS AND ACTRESSES LEAVING THE MARAIS COMPANY 1670-1672

NAME	DATE	DESTINATION
Beauval	1669	provinces
Mlle Beauval	1669	provinces

¹⁰⁶ Jacques Saint-Germain, *La Reynie et la police au Grand Siècle* (Paris, 1962), pp. 72-8.

Chevalier	1670	provinces
Champmeslé	Mar 1670	Hôtel de Bourgogne
Mlle Champmeslé	Mar 1670	Hôtel de Bourgogne
Mlle Argenteuil	Feb 1671	provinces
Jean de Villiers	Apr 1672	provinces
Marin Prévost	Apr 1672	provinces
Des Urlis	1672	provinces
Mlle Des Urlis (Madeleine Hasard)	1672	provinces ¹⁰⁷

Since it was highly advantageous for an actor to be based in Paris rather than in the provinces, where fame and fortune were more difficult to come by, this migration of eight members of a Parisian company would appear extraordinary, and would suggest that the Marais was, indeed, undergoing severe difficulties from 1670 onwards.

In contradiction of this generally accepted view, Deierkauf-Holsboer maintains in her history of the Marais that, far from being in a difficult situation, it was, throughout this period, enjoying considerable success. To prove her point she gives a summary of the Marais's career from 1669 onwards. In that year, the Marais company produced Claude Boyer's pastorale à grand spectacle, *La Fête de Vénus*, to celebrate the end of the War of Devolution. In the preface to this work, it is stated that it was a great success in Paris. This was followed the same year by the actor-dramatist Rosimond's *Le Nouveau Festin de pierre* and *L'Avocat sans étude*. The latter was to prove one of the most successful of his works, and went on to enjoy numerous revivals and re-editions (II, 171-3). Deierkauf-Holsboer also gives De Visé's *Les Intrigues de la lotterie* as having been performed in 1669, but *Mélèse* in

¹⁰⁷ Details in this chart are derived from Deierkauf-Holsboer, *Marais*, II, 170-84, and the relevant entries in Mongrédien and Robert, *Dictionnaire biographique*. At the beginning of 1673, the remaining members of the Marais company, including those hired as replacements, were: La Roque, Rosimond, Verneuil, Catherine Des Urlis, Marie La Vallée, Mlle Auzillon, Dauvilliers, Mlle Dauvilliers, Dupin, Mlle Dupin, Guérin d'Estriché and Mlle Guyot.

his biography of the dramatist states that this work was first given in August 1670.¹⁰⁸

These premières were followed in 1670 by those of Boyer's Polycrate, De Visé's machine play Les Amours de Vénus et d'Adonis and Rosimond's Les Trompeurs trompés, all of which were apparently successful. In fact, Deierkauf-Holsboer conjectures that it was this success on the part of the Marais that aroused the jealousy of the members of the Hôtel de Bourgogne troupe and led them to win over Mlle Champmeslé, the Marais's leading actress and her husband to join them. The Marais company continued their productions in 1670 with Rosimond's La Dupe amoureuse and De Visé's Le Gentilhomme guespin (II, 173-6). The latter's new machine play, Les Amours du Soleil was first performed in February 1671.¹⁰⁹

Nevertheless, despite Deierkauf-Holsboer's contention that these were successful years for the Marais, in March 1671 the company signed a new lease on its theatre in which the annual rent was reduced from the usual 2,400 livres to 1,600 livres (II, 178). There can only have been two possible reasons: either the troupe was unable to continue paying the higher rent and so prevailed upon the landlord to reduce it to allow them to remain in their theatre, or else the theatre had become so devalued on account of the increasing undesirability of its location that the company had demanded that the rent be reduced accordingly.

Between the first performances of Les Amours du Soleil and a revival in October 1671, two new works were given at the Marais. These were Boyer's Lisimène and Rosimond's Les Qui pro quo. Winter 1671-2 saw

¹⁰⁸ Mélése, De Visé, p. 86.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 88.

a new machine play by De Visé, Le Mariage de Bacchus et d'Ariane, so successful that it ran for three months (II, 179-80).¹¹⁰

To underline her presentation of these years as a particularly profitable period in the history of the Marais, Deierkauf-Holsboer asks the following rhetorical questions: Was the Marais inferior to the Hôtel de Bourgogne because it chose to specialize in spectacular productions? Did playwrights like Boyer and De Visé give their plays to be performed before empty houses? Would the actors have undertaken the enormous expense of producing machine plays if they did not expect good returns? She concludes:

L'aperçu que nous avons donné des quatre dernières années de l'exploitation du Marais nous oblige à conclure que la renommée de la troupe et la qualité de son répertoire ont attiré la grande foule des spectateurs en dépit de la situation éloignée de cette salle dans l'ancienne 'rue des Esgouts'. Au début de l'année 1672, le Marais a toujours une place de premier plan dans la capitale. (II, 180)

This may well have been the case in spring 1672, but was not necessarily bound to continue, and the departure of so many actors is a worrying sign as is the reduction in the annual rent. Deierkauf-Holsboer also seriously underestimates the impact that Lully's restriction on stage music would have had on the Marais company. She admits that at first sight the consequences would have appeared to be serious, but goes on to comment that the troupe were in no way discouraged (II, 182). This would be astonishing if it were true; for by this legislation the performance of machine plays which had proved so popular during the last three successive winters became almost impossible. What is more, the company were not only prevented from introducing new works into their repertory, but could not even give revivals of their past successes in the genre.

¹¹⁰ According to Deierkauf-Holsboer (Marais, II, 180), this work was first performed in December 1671 and according to Mélése (De Visé, p. 91), in January 1672.

We have no details of the Marais's activity in the spring and summer of 1672. On 14 November 1672, however, the Marais fought back with the production of Pierre Corneille's Pulchérie, the first work he had given to that theatre in over ten years.¹¹¹ Pulchérie was undoubtedly a success - a fact that De Visé writing in Le Mercure galant seems to find somewhat surprising, given the disadvantages it had to overcome: 'La Pulchérie de M. Corneille l'aîné a été représenté^s sur le théâtre du Marais et tous les obstacles qui empêchent les pièces de réussir dans un quartier si éloigné, n'ont pas été assez puissants pour nuire à cet ouvrage'.¹¹² Pierre Corneille in his preface to the play appears justifiably proud that his work had triumphed against all the odds: 'Bien que cette pièce ait été reléguée dans un lieu où on ne voulait plus se souvenir qu'il y ait un théâtre ... elle n'a pas laissé de peupler ce désert, de mettre en crédit des acteurs dont on ne connaissait pas le mérite'.¹¹³ Corneille's first words seem to indicate that he had not originally intended his work to be performed by the Marais company, from which we can infer that it had been rejected elsewhere, giving us some idea of the credit in which the author was held in these later stages of his career as well as of the plight of the Marais. His final words presumably refer to the fact that due to so many departures the troupe was now largely composed of unknown actors newly arrived from the provinces.

Early in 1673, another new play was presented by the Marais company. This was L'Ambigu comique ou les Amours de Didon et d'Enée by Antoine de Montfleury. One of the more interesting features of this work

¹¹¹ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, II, 182.

¹¹² Mercure galant, 4 (1673), p. 225.

¹¹³ Pierre Corneille, Oeuvres complètes, edited by André Stegmann (Paris, 1963), p. 779.

is its structure, for although when published it was described as a 'tragédie en trois actes', these acts are separated by three comic interludes entitled Le Nouveau marié, Dom Pasquin d'Avalos and Le Semblable à soi-même. This led to the work being popularly known as the 'Didon lardée'. These comic interludes are self-contained one-act farces of the kind known as 'petites pièces'. Indeed, Dom Pasquin d'Avalos and, more frequently, Le Semblable à soi-même were often performed in this capacity at the Guénégaud, accompanying other, longer works.

In his preface to the play, Montfleury states that this unusual structure was inspired by certain Spanish works he had seen and read, and that he had decided to adopt it 'comme un moyen de plaire à ceux qui n'aiment que le sérieux, sans renoncer à celui de divertir ceux qui n'aiment que le comique'.¹¹⁴ Here we see the Marais company attempting to attract a new, tragedy-loving public to their theatre, with their first production of a tragedy unadorned by machines since Pierre Corneille's Sertorius of 1662, while still aiming to satisfy devotees of more popular entertainment.¹¹⁵

L'Ambigu comique is interesting also in that in the first interlude, Le Nouveau marié, direct and self-conscious reference is made to the present plight of the Marais company. Serving as a prologue to the rest of the work, this farce presents M. Vilain, Conseiller d'un Présidial and the son of a rich merchant, married that day to the fifteen year old Lucie. His new wife and her mother have arranged for a theatre company to perform as part of the festivities. Vilain is horrified and proceeds to criticize all types of theatrical

¹¹⁴ Antoine Montfleury, L'Ambigu comique ou les Amours de Didon et d'Enée (Amsterdam, 1679).

¹¹⁵ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, II, 220.

entertainment - comedy is nothing but 'sottise', tragedy is 'un plaisir trop mince ... pour des gens éclairés', and as for the machine play:

Fi, c'est pis quatre fois. Le grand plaisir de voir,
 Sur des monstres formés d'osier et de détrampe,
 Des dieux plus mal montés qu'un sablonnier d'estampe,
 Pendus dans des cartons comme dans des étuis,
 Qui descendent du Ciel comme un seau dans un puits....
 (p. 229)

Shortly afterwards, his new brother-in-law arrives with three carriage-loads of actors. The following conversation ensues:

M. Vilain Mais quels comédiens sont-ce?
 Damis Ceux du Marais.
 M.V. Du Marais! Du Marais! Je crois qu'on s'étudie.
 D. Comment?
 M.V. Vous donnent-ils gratis la comédie?
 D. Ont-ils accoutumé de la donner gratis?
 M.V. Irait-on autrement, mon cher, à votre avis?
 D. Moi, je les ai crus bons, leur équipage est riche;
 Leurs pièces...
 M.V. Les voit-on jamais que dans l'affiche?
 Les acteurs inconnus de ce lieu déserté,
 Sont d'un plan qui n'est jamais bon que transplanté.
 Jamais, sortant chez eux d'une pièce nouvelle,
 Y trouve-t-on jamais ce cortège nombreux
 De pages, de laquais, de carrosses pompeux,
 Dont l'utile embarras, et le grand étalage,
 Font juger par dehors des beautés d'un ouvrage?
 Jamais auteur de nom leur donna-t-il un vers?
 Il faut que le beau-frère ait l'esprit de travers.
 D. Ils auront des auteurs, et ce sont des indices...
 M.V. Oui, l'on dit qu'il leur vient cinq ou six auteurs suisses.
 (pp. 305-6)

These lines are difficult to interpret, especially as Vilain, on discovering the title of the play that the Marais company is about to present, goes on to attack L'Ambigu comique itself:

A cela qui, morbleu, voudrait s'être exposé?
 Qui voudrait avoir eu la vision fantasque,
 D'habiller sans respect la tragédie en masque?
 D'en faire avec la farce un mariage impur?
 L'idée a quelque chose en elle de si dur,
 Qu'un semblable projet, en bonne politique,
 Devait s'être assuré la censure publique.
 (p. 307)

Vilain, as his name suggests, is clearly intended to be antipathetic, and his words are certainly not intended to be taken seriously. Deierkauf-Holsboer concludes, therefore, in her history of the Marais, that what he says is 'contraire à la réalité' (II, 183). This would seem, however, a rather simplistic assessment of the matter; for if there had never been any question of the Marais being isolated, unpopular and with neither actors nor authors of credit, there would have been no point in making these allegations. It would seem more likely that these were, indeed, currently held views of the Marais, which in a gesture of bravado, inspired by the recent success of *Pulchérie*, the company now felt secure enough to satirize in the hope of giving the impression that it had succeeded in overcoming the various disadvantages with which it had been faced. In any event, *L'Ambigu comique* was, itself, a great success, at least according to its author; for Montfleury claims in his preface that it was given some thirty times in succession.¹¹⁶

Shortly after the first performances of *Pulchérie*, Jean Des Urlis and his wife left the Marais troupe to be replaced by Guérin d'Estriché and Mlle Guyot from the Troupe du Duc de Savoie.¹¹⁷ This resulted in the signing of a new act of association by the members of the company on 3 February 1673. This act was to be valid for one year, and any member wishing to leave during that time would have to pay a fine of 1,500 livres to those remaining. This penalty was to be applied even if the actor or actress should be required to leave by order of the King. It

¹¹⁶ John Lough maintains that between twenty-four and thirty performances represented a very striking success (*Paris Theatre Audiences in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London, 1957), p. 52).

¹¹⁷ Mongrédien and Robert, *Dictionnaire biographique*, p. 111.

was also specified that no husband or wife might leave the troupe and his or her spouse remain.¹¹⁸

Nevertheless, the 1,500 livres fine laid down in this act of association was not sufficient to induce Rosimond to remain at the Marais when tempted away to join the former Palais-Royal troupe by the offer of those rôles Molière himself had played. His arrival, together with that of Angélique Du Croisy led, in turn, to a new act of association being passed between them and the remaining members of Molière's troupe on 3 May 1673. This was to run for six years from the date on which they would sign a lease on a new theatre, and in it the shares of the various company members were laid down: Mlle Molière, La Grange, Mlle De Brie, Du Croisy, Hubert and Rosimond were each to have a full share; Mlle La Grange, De Brie, and Mlle Aubry a half share; and Angélique Du Croisy was admitted under her father's supervision with a quarter share. Anyone joining the company in the future would be allocated shares at the company's discretion. It was also stipulated that if any actor or actress left the troupe within the six year period covered by this act, he or she would have to pay a fine of 6,000 livres, half to the company members and half to the Hôpital Général.¹¹⁹ The size of this sum makes it clear that the company was not about to take the risk of having any other members follow the example of those who had left the troupe to join the Hôtel de Bourgogne.

After Rosimond's departure, the Marais, too, was forced to renew its act of association. The new act was signed on 22 May 1673 and was to run until 31 March 1677. The fine of 1,500 livres that had been laid down in the previous contract was increased to 2,000 livres, presumably

¹¹⁸ Deierkauf-Holsboer, *Marais*, II, 184-5.

¹¹⁹ Jules Bonnassies, *La Comédie-Française: histoire administrative (1658-1757)* (Paris, 1874), pp. 23-5.

to discourage further departures, of which half was to go to the Hôpital Général and the Hôtel Dieu.¹²⁰ Typically, Deierkauf-Holsboer in her account of events, maintains that this increase was introduced 'afin de se mettre dorénavant à l'abri des intentions malveillantes de La Grange' (II, 187). The fact remains, however, that the Marais company was significantly less well-protected in this respect than the former Palais-Royal troupe, thus allowing actors to move from the Marais to join the rival company with greater facility than was the case for moves in the opposite direction.

LEASING OF THE GUENEGAUD

It still remained for the former Palais-Royal troupe to find itself a theatre. One possibility was the Jeu de Paume de Becquet which Lully had recently vacated. The reason generally given for this option not being taken up is that the building was in an extremely dilapidated condition. Thierry describes 'un plafond neuf déjà menaçant et des plâtres fendus', and Valmy-Baisse 'des lézardes et un plafond délabré'.¹²¹ Unfortunately, neither gives the source of his information. We have seen, however, that one of the terms of Lully's lease was that the Becquet had to be handed back to its owners in precisely the same condition as it had been found. Any repairs needed were, therefore, Lully's responsibility rather than that of any subsequent tenants. These were carried out somewhat tardily, for it was not until November 1673 that it was declared 'que les lieux étaient en bon état de toutes réparations et rétablissement que Lully était tenu de faire'.¹²² The former Palais-Royal troupe, with no source of income other than from

¹²⁰ Deierkauf-Holsboer, *Marais*, II, 188.

¹²¹ La Grange, *Registre*, ed. Thierry, p. xix; Valmy-Baisse, *Naissance et vie*, p. 93.

¹²² Nutter and Thoinan, *Origines*, p. 284.

public performances, would have been severely inconvenienced by having to wait so long before opening their new theatre, and no doubt despaired of obtaining that Lully carry out his obligation more quickly, especially as, with competition being unwelcome, it was not in his own interest to do so.

What is more, if the troupe had taken the Becquet, their opening would have been further delayed by the necessity of constructing a theatre, since restoring the building to its original state would have meant destroying Vigarani's stage and auditorium. That Lully intended this to be done we know from his letter to Colbert in which he states that: 'L'Académie <est> présentement dans la nécessité de payer les loyers du lieu où elle est, de le rétablir en sortant, de faire transporter la salle et les machines au Palais-Royal'.¹²³ It would, therefore, have been necessary for the remaining members of Molière's troupe to start again from scratch, whereas they would obviously have preferred to take over a theatre already equipped and ready for them to begin performances immediately. Bearing this in mind, it has been suggested that, not content with poaching one of its best actors, they even considered appropriating the Marais company's theatre. According to Thierry, they only rejected this plan on the grounds that it was too far distant from the centre of Paris.¹²⁴ This view is reiterated by Valmy-Baisse, who writes of La Grange and his search for a theatre: 'Il ne s'arrêta que peu de temps au Marais; sa troupe elle-même commençait à se lasser de ce quartier du Temple vers lequel le public n'allait plus guère'.¹²⁵

¹²³ Cordey, 'Lully installe l'Opéra', p. 138.

¹²⁴ La Grange, Registre, ed. Thierry, p. xix.

¹²⁵ Naissance et vie, p. 93.

At first sight this would seem a ludicrous suggestion, especially as the Marais troupe appeared at that time to be in a much stronger position than the remainder of Molière's company - in possession of a theatre, however remote, and trying with some success to adapt their material so as to retain their audience in the face of opposition and competition from Lully. It would have been possible for the former Palais-Royal troupe to take over the Marais, however, if that company itself was planning to move, and, according to Jules Bonnassies, that was, indeed, the case. The theatre to which it intended to transfer was none other than the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille in the rue Mazarine opposite the rue Guénégaud.¹²⁶ Indeed, it had even succeeded in obtaining the King's permission to take the theatre, despite his having banned Sourdéac and Champeron from leasing it to any company of actors then operating in Paris.¹²⁷ This no doubt constituted an attempt to further raise their fortunes by moving out of an area that had become so unpopular. It was, however, doomed to failure, for, alerted by the Marais company's interest, the former Palais-Royal troupe proceeded to steal the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille from under its nose.

La Grange was subsequently to deny all knowledge of the Marais company's prior agreement with Sourdéac and Champeron. In 1679, during the Guénégaud troupe's legal dispute with Mlle Auzillon, he was asked: 'S'il n'est pas vrai que le Roi ayant permis au sieur de Champeron de disposer dudit lieu de la rue Mazarine en faveur des comédiens du Marais, et que ceux qui restaient de celle de Molière firent séparément diverses propositions audit sieur de Champeron pour s'accommoder dudit lieu?'¹²⁸ La Grange replied:

¹²⁶ Bonnassies, *Histoire administrative*, p. 27.

¹²⁷ Monval, 'Affaire Auzillon', p. 76.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

... qu'il est vrai que l'on a traité avec les sieurs de Sourdéac et de Champeron pour les machines et le théâtre, que l'on a loué ladite salle, que l'on n'a point eu connaissance que ledit sieur de Champeron eût besoin d'obtenir aucune promesse pour disposer desdits lieux qui étaient à lui; mais qu'il est vrai que le Roi eut la bonté d'accorder à la troupe du sieur de Molière la permission de s'établir dans Paris, aux lieux que bon leur semblerait. Ne sait point si les comédiens du Marais ont fait de leur part quelque proposition, n'ayant connaissance que de ce qui s'est passé à l'égard de la troupe du sieur de Molière. (pp. 76-7)

In fact, La Grange may not have been as fully in charge of these negotiations as he implies here, for, during their interrogation as part of the same dispute, Mlles Molière, De Brie and Du Croisy were asked an almost identical question concerning the race for possession of the Guénégaud. This was immediately followed by a question about their trip to see Champeron on 26 April 1673 that they were accused of keeping secret from La Grange in order that he and his wife might be excluded from the newly reconstituted troupe (p. 55).

The first recorded contact between the Palais-Royal company and the proprietors of the Guénégaud had occurred prior to this date, when Du Croisy took a chaise to see Champeron, probably on 25 April 1673.¹²⁹ This date, together with that of the visit by the three actresses, is highly significant in that Lully's Becquet opera house only opened with the performance of *Cadmus et Hermione* on 27 April 1673. He was awarded the use of the Palais-Royal the following day, 28 April 1673. Thus, at least two meetings occurred between members of Molière's company and the proprietors of the Guénégaud while the former were still in possession of their Palais-Royal theatre. There are several possible explanations: either they had been warned that they were not to enjoy its use for very much longer, or they had been alerted by the interest shown in the Guénégaud by the Marais company and did not wish their rivals to obtain

¹²⁹ Thierry, Documents, p. 305.

an advantage over them, or else certain members of the Palais-Royal troupe wished to set up elsewhere on their own. In any event, it is some indication of how much of an asset the Guénégaud theatre must have appeared, that not only the Marais troupe who desperately needed to find a new location were interested in it, but also members of the Palais-Royal company who had spent a considerable sum on modernizing their theatre just two years before.

Despite La Grange's claim that he had no knowledge of the Marais company's agreement with Sourdéac and Champeron, in the intervening period from this first contact between the theatre proprietors and the Palais-Royal troupe and the final transfer of the lease on the Guénégaud, a certain amount of negotiation did take place between members of the Palais-Royal and Marais companies. Early in May 1673, a trip was made by persons unknown to the Marais theatre, there to consult MM. Dupin and D'Estriché, and shortly afterwards, the Palais-Royal troupe paid 3 livres for a chaise for D'Estriché and a certain G., possibly Mlle Guyot.¹³⁰ Whether these negotiations concerned the leasing of the Guénégaud or constituted an attempt to persuade yet more members of the Marais company to join it is impossible to say.

Finally, on 23 May 1673, an act was signed before Maîtres Beaufort and Gigault by which, for 30,000 livres, Sourdéac and Champeron made over to the former Palais-Royal troupe the lease on the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille. This lease specified that an annual rent of 2,400 livres was to be paid to its owners, Maximilien de Laffemas and the other heirs of Isaac de Laffemas. Sourdéac and Champeron also sold outright the contents of the theatre including the stage machinery. A second act was signed the same day before Maîtres Chuppin and Lenormand which stated that of the agreed 30,000 livres only 14,000 livres would be paid in the

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 55.

first instance, the remaining 16,000 livres to be paid by the company at the rate of 50 livres per performance day. Finally, a third act was signed, also on the same day, before Maîtres Moufle and Ferret specifying that as payment of the 16,000 livres, instead of receiving 50 livres per performance, Sourdéac and Champeron would each receive a share in the company for life. What is more, whereas the usual practice was that on a company member's death their share would be paid to their heirs for the remainder of the season in which the death occurred, Champeron's share was to pass to his brother Bersac de Fondant de Lalande.¹³¹ This act also established other details of the company's organization which will be discussed when considering the Guénégaud's administration.

Being obliged to pay rent was a new experience for the former members of Molière's troupe, who had previously been allowed the free use of first the Petit-Bourbon and then the Palais-Royal theatres as a mark of the King's favour, in addition to receiving a royal pension.¹³² Nonetheless, the company members recorded in this third act their intention of renewing the lease on the Guénégaud as soon as possible and for as long as possible. As the company was still not up to full performing strength, its members also recorded their intention of recruiting new actors who, although taken on after the act had been signed, would still have to pay their share of the troupe's 14,000 livres debt. Sourdéac and Champeron were to have a say in the troupe's deliberations and decisions on exactly the same footing as the actors and actresses, and were to give 'leurs soins, avis et ministère quand il

¹³¹ Bonnassies, Histoire administrative, pp. 27-30.

¹³² The final instal~~l~~ment of this pension was not paid until 6 July 1674, when La Grange noted in his Registre 'Reçu du Roi pour la dernière année de la pension du Palais-Royal 7,000 livres' (I, 161).

en sera besoin dans toutes les pièces qu'elle représentera'.¹³³ In fact, it was intended that they should be in charge of the design, construction and operation of all the theatrical machinery used by the company, and their being taken on in this capacity at this time is a clear indication that, despite opposition from Lully, the troupe intended to make spectacular productions an important part of its repertory, a fact which doubtless influenced the choice of the Guénégaud as a venue. Finally, the actors from the Palais-Royal troupe stated that they were bringing with them the ten crystal chandeliers from that theatre, as well as the 'décorations' and all other things belonging to them.¹³⁴ This is intriguing in that, once established at the Guénégaud, only eight chandeliers are recorded as having been used (e.g. R II, 149). Whether the others were damaged in transit, or else proved unnecessary because of the dimensions of the Guénégaud stage we do not know.

The 14,000 livres the company required to pay Sourdéac and Champeron were loaned to them by André Boudet, Tapissier du Roi, Molière's brother-in-law and, on his death, co-guardian of his daughter along with Mlle Molière. In fact the money actually came from Mlle Molière herself, with Boudet merely acting as an intermediary. The greater part of the sum came, almost certainly from the return of money Molière had lent to Lully some two and a half years before,¹³⁵ with the addition of 3,000 livres from some other source, possibly also a reclaimed debt. The following chart shows the financial transactions relating to this 14,000 livres.

¹³³ Bonnassies, *Histoire administrative*, pp. 30-1.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

**FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS RELATING TO THE SUM REQUIRED FOR THE PURCHASE OF
THE LEASE ON THE GUENEGAUD THEATRE**

DATE	TRANSACTION
14 Dec 1670	Lully to pay Molière 550* annuity on loan of 11,000* ¹³⁶
10 May 1673	'le syndic du diocèse de Viviers' ordered to repay 3,200* to Mlle Molière ¹³⁷
22 May 1673	Lully repaid 11,241* 7s to Mlle Molière including annuity arrears ¹³⁸
14 Jul 1673	Boudet to pay Mlle Molière 700* annuity on loan of 14,000* ¹³⁹
15 Jul 1673	Guénégaud troupe to pay Boudet 700* annuity on loan of 14,000* ¹⁴⁰
3 Apr 1675	Guénégaud troupe repaid 11,000* to Boudet plus 700* annuity plus 501* 13s 4d additional interest ¹⁴¹
3 Sep 1675	Boudet repaid 4,800* to Mlle Molière ¹⁴²
26 Oct 1675	Boudet repaid 6,200* to Mlle Molière ¹⁴³
17 May 1677	Guénégaud troupe borrowed 3,400* from 'un particulier' at no interest to repay 3,000* to Boudet plus 400* interest ¹⁴⁴
"	Boudet repaid 3,000* to Mlle Molière ¹⁴⁵
26 Oct 1677	Guénégaud troupe repaid 3,400* to 'un particulier' (R V, 74 v°)

It is interesting to note that Sourdéac and Champeron were prepared to wait until mid-July 1673 for their payment, almost a week after the Guénégaud had opened its doors, in order to give the company time to raise the necessary funds. A document preserved in the Archives of the Comédie-Française gives further details as to how this was done, as well as of the way in which the money was paid back. This document is

¹³⁶ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, *Cent ans*, p. 578.

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 659.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ La Grange, *Registre*, I, 147.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 171.

¹⁴² Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, *Cent ans*, p. 664.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ La Grange, *Registre*, I, 192.

¹⁴⁵ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, *Cent ans*, p. 666.

the earliest surviving record of the proceedings at one of the Guénégaud company's assemblies, in this case held for the 'Délibération de la troupe pour le parfait remboursement du fonds et amortissement de la rente de 700 livres qu'elle devait pour l'achat du théâtre et machines'.¹⁴⁶ It reads:

dues

La compagnie s'étant assemblée aujourd'hui le 17 mai 1677 a délibéré de racheter les 150 livres de rente qui restent ~~dûs~~ à M. Boudet des 700 livres de rente qui lui ont été constitués le 15 juillet 1673 et de lui en payer lesdits intérêts qui en sont dûs depuis le 4 avril 1675 montant jusqu'aujourd'hui à la somme de 317* 18^d 6^d comme aussi a délibéré de payer à Mlle de Molière les intérêts des 11,000 livres qu'elle a reçus de M. Lully depuis le 22 mai 1673 jusqu'audit jour le 15 juillet 1673 montant à la somme de 82* 6^s¹⁴⁷

In order to repay this total sum of 3,400 livres 8 sols 4 deniers, the company borrowed 1,650 livres from Hubert and took the rest from the savings kept on behalf of the troupe by La Grange.¹⁴⁸ It appears, therefore, that Hubert was the 'particulier' referred to by La Grange and in the Guénégaud account books, even though he did not provide the whole amount. That interest was paid to Mlle Molière as well as to Boudet on 17 May 1677 is specified neither by La Grange in his *Registre* nor in those of the company. That this was the case indicates that the members of the Guénégaud troupe were fully aware of the true source of the money loaned to them. Indeed, it would seem that it was at their instigation that Mlle Molière asked for the return of the sum her husband had loaned to Lully, so that she might lend it to Boudet and so, indirectly, to the troupe, with the company paying her the interest she

¹⁴⁶ Sylvie Chevalley, 'Les Premières Assemblées des comédiens français', in *Mélanges de littérature et d'histoire offerts à Georges Couton* (Paris, 1981), pp. 443-51 (p. 443).

¹⁴⁷ Archives de la Comédie-Française, Dossier Feuilles d'Assemblée.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

would have gained had it remained with Lully in the intervening period so that she should not lose by the transaction. There remains, of course, the question of why Mlle Molière was forced to use Boudet as an intermediary, instead of lending the money directly to the company herself.

Mlle Molière did, in fact, come to regret this subterfuge, for she was forced to go to court to obtain the return of part of her money in 1675, despite the fact that Boudet had already been reimbursed by the Guénégaud company. The circumstances are outlined by Madeleine Jurgens and Elizabeth Maxfield-Miller:

Armande ayant appris qu'André Boudet avait la possibilité de lui rembourser une partie de 14,000 livres prêtées le 14 juillet 1673 ... avait l'intention de l'employer à acheter des rentes sur l'Hôtel de Ville. Boudet refusa. Armande invoqua l'intérêt de sa fille et fit convoquer les parents et amis de celle-ci, le 30 juin.... <Ils> approuvèrent l'intention d'Armande et désignèrent un procureur pour transmettre leur opinion au Lieutenant Civil au Châtelet. La décision de celui-ci dut être conforme à leurs avis, car le 3 septembre suivant, Boudet restituait 4,800 livres qu'Armande employait aussitôt à l'achat de 600 livres de rente....¹⁴⁹

UNION OF THE TROUPES

Two days after the three acts settling the transfer of the lease on the Guénégaud theatre were signed, on 25 May 1673, the Marais company gave the first performance of Edmé Boursault's Les Amours de Germanicus. Following on the successes of Pulchérie and L'Ambigu comique, Deierkauf-Holsboer in her history of the Marais, sees in the production of this work, for which the troupe promised the author 1,300 livres, a sign of its renewed confidence in its ability to continue to attract spectators, even given the changes it had been forced to make in its repertory. She further sees it as a mark of the play's popularity that it was given

¹⁴⁹ Cent ans, p. 194.

again soon afterwards, in June 1673, when it was apparently performed to crowds of spectators (II, 188-9). Deierkauf-Holsboer is, however, to a certain extent contradicted by the fact that the Marais company were unable to pay the 1,300 livres agreed upon with Boursault. The debt was only settled at the time of the work's revival at the Guénégaud when, between 13 October 1673 and 12 November 1673, 567 livres 16 sols were set aside by Hubert 'sur la ~~de~~^f de Germanicus' (R I, 46-59). This payment by the Guénégaud troupe is confirmed by La Grange's ~~assertions~~ at the time of the company's dispute with Mlle Auzillon, when he stated that 'ladite Dumont <Auzillon> sait bien que l'on a payé pour elle et pour quelques autres de la troupe du Marais 1,300 livres qui étaient dûes au sieur Boursault pour Germanicus et plusieurs autres ~~de~~^f tes pour raison de quoi le répondant proteste'.¹⁵⁰ It would also seem that, despite its apparent success, there were sums outstanding on Montfleury's L'Ambigu comique, for when this play was revived at the Guénégaud in August 1673, 250 livres were set aside from the takings for its author (R I, 18-9).

Nevertheless, on 23 June 1673, a royal ordonnance was issued, signed by La Reynie, giving the former Palais-Royal troupe permission to transfer to the Guénégaud, 'de s'établir et de continuer à donner au public des comédies et autres divertissements honnêtes', while at the same time forbidding 'la troupe des comédiens du quartier du Marais de continuer et donner au public des comédies, soit dans ledit quartier ou autre de cette ville et faubourgs de Paris'.¹⁵¹ One possible explanation of this action is that the King had remained steadfast in his desire to have only two companies of French actors operating in the capital.

¹⁵⁰ Monval, 'Affaire Auzillon', pp. 84-5. Mlle Auzillon was frequently referred to by her maiden name of Dumont.

¹⁵¹ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, I, 189.

Earlier in the year, it would have appeared comparatively simple to have the remaining members of Molière's troupe absorbed into the Hôtel de Bourgogne and Marais companies. Now it was more difficult, since the Palais-Royal troupe had succeeded in replacing at least some of its departed actors, and had established itself in one of the most modern and best-situated of Parisian theatres. Indeed, it is a sign that they had regained some degree of royal approval that they were allowed to transfer their activity to the Guénégaud, when Sourdéac and Champeron had been forbidden to lease it to any company of actors then operating in Paris. Clearly, their many trips to consult patrons at Court and elsewhere had proved worthwhile. The Marais company, too, enjoyed the favour of noble patrons and, according to Chappuzeau in Le Théâtre français, similarly attempted to bring its big guns into play, although evidently with less success (p. 127). The Marais, therefore, suffered by this unexpected revival in the fortunes of the former Palais-Royal troupe. In this period of monopolies, with the Opera established at the Palais-Royal, the Hôtel de Bourgogne specializing in tragedy, and the new Guénégaud troupe seeming the obvious candidate to specialize in comedy thanks to its Molière inheritance, the Marais company would no doubt have appeared the most easily dispensable, especially as it was now unable to perform its own speciality, the machine play.

There are in existence several accounts of the events of May and June 1673, most notably those given by Chappuzeau in Le Théâtre français, La Grange in his Registre, and Hubert and La Grange at the time of the Guénégaud company's dispute with Mlle Auzillon. According to Chappuzeau, after the negotiations relating to the union of the remainder of Molière's troupe and that of the Marais had broken down:

... Sa Majesté ordonna à M. Colbert d'avoir également soin de la troupe du Marais, et du débris de celle du Palais-Royal, en faisant choix, comme il le jugerait à propos, des

plus habiles de l'une et de l'autre, pour en former une belle troupe. Ce grand Ministre d'Etat, chargé du poids des premières affaires du royaume, se déroba de quelques moments pour régler celles des comédiens; il nomma les personnes qui devaient composer la nouvelle troupe, ordonna des parts, des demi-parts, des quarts et trois-quarts de part, fit défense de la part du Roi aux comédiens du Marais en général de paraître jamais sur ce théâtre, et en tira des particuliers selon qu'il le trouva bon, pour les unir à ceux du Palais-Royal. (p. 127)

This differs greatly from La Grange's account in his Registre, in which he suggests that it was the Palais-Royal troupe itself rather than Colbert, that decided which actors and actresses from the Marais should join it at the Guénégaud: 'Ladite Troupe du Roi associa encore ceux qu'elle jugea à propos des comédiens du Marais pour se mettre en état de commencer avec avantages sur un nouveau théâtre' (I, 148). In 1679, this view was reiterated by Hubert, who, when asked if in order that they might make a selection, 'il fut fait un rôle de tous les acteurs et actrices de la Troupe du Marais et du reste de celle de Molière qui fut porté à Monsieur Colbert et à Monsieur de La Reynie?', replied 'qu'il n'y a point eu de rôle, que le choix fut fait à la volonté de ladite Troupe du Roi'.¹⁵² At the same time, while still insisting that the choice of actors from the Marais was made by the Palais-Royal troupe alone, La Grange went so far as to suggest that it was at its instigation that the Marais company was suppressed:

... le Roi accorda aux comédiens de la troupe du feu Molière, sur les très humbles prières qu'ils lui en firent, qu'il n'y aurait à Paris que deux troupes de comédiens et leur donna la liberté de choisir des acteurs où ils jugerent ~~aient~~ ^{aient} à propos; qu'il est vrai qu'ils prirent quelques comédiens du Marais étant persuadés de leur capacité, ce qui ne se fit qu'après par ordonnance de police la troupe desdits comédiens du Marais fut supprimé² et leur porte fermée. (p. 77)

¹⁵² Monval, 'Affaire Auzillon', p. 78.

This last point is a direct contradiction of Chappuzeau's statement that it was only after he had decided on the composition of the new Guénégaud company that Colbert ordered the Marais to be closed. There appear, therefore, to be two main areas of conflict between these accounts: the question of who selected the actors and actresses to join the Guénégaud company from the Marais, and the date of this selection in relation to the closure of that theatre.

Of these contradictory accounts, Deierkauf-Holsboer prefers to accept Chappuzeau's view rather than that of La Grange in which the Marais is depicted in a secondary and subservient rôle, its closure casting doubt on the success of its productions and the selection process on the ability of its actors (II, 209). In fact, only two members of the Marais troupe did not subsequently transfer to the Guénégaud: Catherine Des Urlis and Marie La Vallée. There is, however, some doubt as to whether they were refused admission or themselves refused to join. Whichever was the case, the two actresses proceeded to take legal action, alleging that their former colleagues had broken the terms of the two acts of association signed on 3 February 1672 and 22 May 1673 and were, therefore, each liable to the penalty of 2,000 livres.¹⁵³ This action was brought by the two actresses against all but one of the former members of the Marais company, the exception being Mlle Auzillon. Possible reasons for her omission will be discussed later.

The case was heard on 4 August 1673, with Guérin acting for the Marais troupe and Maurice for Des Urlis and La Vallée. The verdict or Sentence du Châtelet was as follows:

Nous faisons droit sur les contestations des parties
ordonnons ... que les contrats desdits jours troisième

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 193.

février et vingt-deux mai seront exécutés, condamnons les parties de Guérin à payer les peines y contenues aux parties de Maurice, si mieux n'aiment les parties de Guérin de faire agréer et entrer les parties de Maurice en la troupe en laquelle ils seront entrés, et à faute de ce faire la présente sentence sera exécutée purement et simplement....¹⁵⁴

This adjudication states quite clearly that those members of the Marais company who transferred to the Guénégaud were in breach of their contracts. It, therefore, confirms, in contradiction of La Grange, that the Marais was still functioning when they did so, for if the theatre had already been closed down, the two acts of association would no longer have applied. Deierkauf-Holsboer is mistaken, however, when she states that this proves that the actors left the Marais of their own free will because, 's'ils avaient quitté la troupe du Marais par ordre du Roi, le Châtelet ne les aurait pas condamnés à payer une si forte amende' (II, 195). In fact, as we have seen, in the first act of association of 3 February 1673, it was stated that even if an actor or actress were to leave the Marais company by royal command, he or she would still have to pay the fine.¹⁵⁵

To explain why the Marais troupe did not transfer to the Guénégaud in its entirety, Deierkauf-Holsboer maintains that Des Urlis and La Vallée elected to remain behind when their comrades left, feeling themselves bound by the two acts of association and, above all, not wishing to work with La Grange (II, 196-7). It was, indeed, stated in the second act of association that if one or several of the members of the Marais company should choose to leave and pay the fine, the rest ~~f~~'sera corps' and remain together.¹⁵⁶ Deierkauf-Holsboer supports her

¹⁵⁴ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, II, 194.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 323.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 324.

contention by referring to the Châtelet decision of 4 August 1673 where, as we have seen, it was adjudged that the 'parties de Guérin' would be fined, 'si mieux n'aiment les parties de Guérin faire agréer et entrer les parties de Maurice en la troupe en laquelle ils seront entrés'.¹⁵⁷ Deierkauf-Holsboer takes this to mean that those actors and actresses from the Marais who had gone to the Guénégaud would not be fined if they could persuade Des Urlis and La Vallée to join them there, since all would be equally in breach of their acts of association. She adds that this decision proves that the two women were not prevented from joining the Guénégaud by order of the King, since the court would not have dared over-rule such a directive in its verdict, and finds it important that all members of the Marais company had the opportunity of joining the Guénégaud which could, therefore, be defined as a true fusion of the Marais and Palais-Royal companies (II, 194).

Two factors combine to contradict this view. Firstly, it is incredible that Des Urlis and La Vallée would have preferred not to move to the Guénégaud if given the opportunity to do so, especially as none of their comrades at the Marais had any such scruples about transferring. Secondly, the words 'faire agréer et entrer' are open to a different interpretation, since the Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française of 1694 defines 'agréer' as meaning 'recevoir favorablement'.¹⁵⁸ It would seem, therefore, more likely that the members of the Marais troupe who had gone to the Guénégaud did not, as Deierkauf-Holsboer suggests, have to persuade their two former colleagues to join them there, but rather persuade those members of the Guénégaud company who had come from the Palais-Royal to accept the two actresses into the new troupe. Thus, even if Colbert did have the final word on the composition of the new

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française, 2 vols (Paris, 1694), I, 539.

company at the Guénégaud, it would appear irrefutable that the remainder of Molière's troupe, together with its new recruits Rosimond and Angélique Du Croisy, also had some say as to which actors they would accept from the Marais, just as La Grange maintained.

That some negotiation between Colbert and the former Palais-Royal troupe did take place would seem to be confirmed by the fact that members of the company are recorded as having made several trips to see him at Sceaux: two before they took over the lease on the Guénégaud, on 14 and 15 May 1673, and three after, on 25 and 29 May, and 15 June 1673.¹⁵⁹ On 16 May 1673, a trip was made to see Monsieur, the King's brother, who had been patron of Molière's troupe from its arrival in Paris in 1658 up until 14 August 1665.¹⁶⁰ The purpose of this journey was 'pour dire adieu',¹⁶¹ and this may have been the period when it seemed likely that the former Palais-Royal troupe would be disbanded and its actors dispersed to other companies. By the time of the third trip to see Colbert on 25 May, however, this situation would have changed completely, for, by taking over the lease on such a well-equipped and well-positioned theatre as the Guénégaud just two days earlier, the former Palais-Royal troupe would have found itself the equal if not the superior of the Marais in any fight for survival. The two trips to see Colbert made on 25 and 29 May could either have been to thank him for allowing the company to establish itself at the Guénégaud, or else to negotiate the closure of the Marais and the transfer of its actors.

In fact, there had been contact between the Palais-Royal and Marais companies prior to the first of these meetings with Colbert, when, in May, a trip was made to the latter theatre to consult Dupin and

¹⁵⁹ Thierry, *Documents*, pp. 321, 336.

¹⁶⁰ La Grange, *Registre*, I, 78.

¹⁶¹ Thierry, *Documents*, p. 321.

D'Estriché, and no doubt persuade them to desert their fellows.¹⁶² A further journey was made to the Marais theatre on behalf of the former Palais-Royal company after the transfer of the lease on the Guénégaud, on 10 June 1673. On this occasion, however, the trip was made not by a member of the company, but by Jean Donneau De Visé.¹⁶³ Some days later, De Visé made a second journey on behalf of the troupe, but this time his destination is unknown.¹⁶⁴ It would seem, therefore, that at this stage in the negotiations, a mediator was being employed to settle the differences between the Guénégaud and Marais companies, and that this mediator was De Visé.

In 1673, De Visé was thirty-five years old. He was the founder of *Le Mercure galant*, as well as the author of successful comedies and machine plays. De Visé had begun his journalistic career in 1662 by attacking Molière in *Les Nouvelles nouvelles*, his first published work;¹⁶⁵ and went on to take sides against him in the 'Querelle de L'Ecole des femmes' of 1663, to which De Visé contributed *Zélinde*, *La Vengeance des marquis* and his *Lettre sur les affaires du théâtre*.¹⁶⁶ Notwithstanding, relations between the two men improved to such an extent that De Visé had a considerable number of plays performed by Molière's troupe,¹⁶⁷ and, after the latter's death, was on the family

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 315.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 327.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 337.

¹⁶⁵ Mélése, *De Visé*, pp. 15-8.

¹⁶⁶ Georges Mongrédien, 'Le Fondateur du *Mercure galant*: Jean Donneau De Visé', *Mercure de France* (1 October 1937), pp. 89-116 (p. 98).

¹⁶⁷ *La Mère coquette* (1665), *La Veuve à la mode* (1667), *La Pastorale de Délie* (1667), *L'Embarras de Godard* (1667) and *Les Maux sans remèdes* (1669), (Mongrédien, 'De Visé', pp. 99-102). According to Pierre Mélése (*De Visé*, p. 76), the petite pièce, *Le Fin/Feint Lourdaud* (1668), may also have been his work.

council advising Mlle Molière on her daughter's affairs.¹⁶⁸ It would seem, however, that in 1669, some disagreement occurred between the two men, for De Visé suddenly switched his allegiance to the Marais, and Molière's company ceased to perform even those of his plays already in their repertory.¹⁶⁹ At the Marais, De Visé enjoyed considerable success with his comedies (Le Gentilhomme Guespin and Les Intrigues de la loterie, both produced in 1670), and, above all, his machine plays (Les Amours de Vénus et d'Adonis, 1670; Les Amours du Soleil, 1671; and Le Mariage de Bacchus et d'Ariane, 1672).¹⁷⁰ Nevertheless, when the production of machine plays became impossible, De Visé returned to Molière and the Palais-Royal troupe. It was there that his Les Maris infidèles was given in January 1673, the only play by an author other than Molière to be performed by that troupe during the final season of its activity.¹⁷¹

Clearly, De Visé would have been the ideal person to liaise between the former Palais-Royal and Marais troupes, with both of which he had worked so closely.¹⁷² He may not, however, have been acting solely out of disinterested concern for the welfare of the two companies, for the Guénégaud Registres record the payment to him of considerable sums during the first season of the company's existence: 74 livres 10 sols on 10 September, 6 livres on 12 September, 20 livres 10

¹⁶⁸ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 661.

¹⁶⁹ Mélése, De Visé, p. 77.

¹⁷⁰ Mongrédien, 'De Visé', pp. 103-4.

¹⁷¹ Chevalley, 'Etude critique', p. 178.

¹⁷² De Visé may, indeed, have acted for the Palais-Royal company prior to Molière's death, for the 'Registre d'Hubert' records that on 10 February 1673 were: 'Donnés à Monsieur Baron deux cents vingt livres qu'on lui a avancés pour Monsieur De Visé' ('Le Registre d'Hubert, 1672-1673', Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre, 25 (1973), pp. 1-132 (p. 116).

sols on 15 September, 132 livres on 17 September, 7 livres 16 sols on 19 September, 86 livres 5 sols on 21 September and 33 livres on 26 September 1673, giving a total of 360 livres 1 sol (R I, 30-8).¹⁷³ No explanation is given for these payments, which were certainly not to settle debts outstanding on *Les Maris infidèles* which had been performed eight months previously, and for which De Visé had received a share in the takings.¹⁷⁴ If not, as seems most likely, payment for services rendered at the time of the union of the Palais-Royal and Marais troupes, these sums could, possibly, have been paid in recognition of the publicity given to the new Guénégaud company by De Visé in *Le Mercure galant* of December 1673, originally scheduled to appear in August.¹⁷⁵ This would be reminiscent of the sum paid to Chappuzeau shortly before the appearance of *Le Théâtre français*. Such an explanation is, however, unlikely, since De Visé received some ten times more. De Visé gave the Guénégaud troupe a rapturous reception in his gazette, reiterating the view of the merger expressed by La Grange: 'La troupe du feu sieur de Molière ayant choisi ce qu'il y avait de bons acteurs dans celle du Marais, en a composé une des plus amples et des plus belles'.¹⁷⁶

De Visé, as we will see, was to continue to use *Le Mercure galant* as a tool to serve the Guénégaud company throughout its career, stirring up public curiosity with announcements of forthcoming productions, and fanning interest with favourable reviews. This was particularly the case

¹⁷³ In their analysis of the Guénégaud account books, Bert Edward and Grace Philputt Young neglect to mention those payments made to De Visé on 15, 17 and 19 September, and give the sum paid on 26 September as 330 livres (*La Grange, Registre*, II, 120).

¹⁷⁴ Chevalley, 'Etude critique', p. 178.

¹⁷⁵ Mélése, *De Visé*, p. 115. Mélése, however, makes no mention of De Visé's association with the Guénégaud company.

¹⁷⁶ *Mercure galant*, 5 (1674), p. 259.

for those presentations in which he had a hand, for De Visé was to further develop his interest in the machine play at the Guénégaud, working in collaboration with Thomas Corneille to produce some of the company's greatest successes, including *Circé*, *L'Inconnu* and *La Devineresse*. Indeed, De Visé may well have played a part in bringing Thomas to the Guénégaud, for relations between the latter and Molière's troupe had been somewhat strained in earlier years. De Visé, who was to make Thomas his associate on *Le Mercure galant* in 1677, with an official contract between them four years later in 1681,¹⁷⁷ no doubt helped to bridge this gap as well as the one between the Palais-Royal and Marais troupes.

The negotiations between the former Palais-Royal troupe, Colbert, De Visé and the Marais company all took place in May and the first two weeks of June 1673. This confirms what we have been able to deduce from the Sentence du Châtelet, and contradicts the description of events given by La Grange. In both of his accounts, La Grange states that the Marais theatre was closed down, implying on one occasion that this was at the request of the former Palais-Royal troupe, which subsequently selected certain actors to join it at the Guénégaud. As we have seen, the troupe does, indeed, appear to have had some say as to which actors it would accept. These negotiations, however, took place before the Marais theatre was closed down by the ordonnance of 23 June 1673. The sequence of events, therefore, was probably very much as Deierkauf-Holsboer suggests, with the Marais theatre being closed down and its troupe disbanded only once the future of its actors had been assured (II, 200).

Regardless of La Grange's assertions, the Palais-Royal troupe did not have a total say in the composition of the new company, for one

¹⁷⁷ Reynier, Thomas Corneille, p. 76.

particular member was foisted upon them from the Marais, despite all their efforts to the contrary. We have already seen that when Des Urlis and La Vallée brought their action against those members of the Marais troupe who had moved to the Guénégaud, Mlle Auzillon was excepted, in spite of the fact that she, too, had transferred. Deierkauf-Holsboer explains that this actress was originally rejected by La Grange, but that her name was added to the list of actors to pass from the Marais to the Guénégaud by Colbert: 'Cette actrice n'est donc pas passée dans la troupe Guénégaud de son propre chef, puisque Colbert a ajouté lui-même son nom à celui des autres comédiens. Voilà pourquoi aucune plainte n'a été portée contre elle pour rupture de contrat' (II, 198).

It is unlikely that Colbert would have included Mlle Auzillon's name without being asked to do so, and, indeed, it appears that not only did the actress petition him herself, she also obtained that certain influential friends intercede with him on her behalf. In 1679, while denying any involvement by Colbert, La Grange stated that, 'la troupe étant complète, à la recommandation de quelques personnes de qualité ladite Dumont <Auzillon> fut admise par grâce, quoique inutile'.¹⁷⁸ Hubert added more fully: 'à l'égard de ladite Dumont, après le nombre de leur troupe complet, elle employa le crédit de quelques personnes de la première qualité auxquelles ils ne purent pas refuser de la prendre à trois quarts de part quoique inutile et à la charge de la troupe'.¹⁷⁹ Of course, Colbert may well have been one of the people involved in forcing the Palais-Royal troupe to accept her. Another person involved was the Lieutenant de Police, La Reynie. Four trips were made to see him on behalf of the new Guénégaud company in June 1673 'pour l'affaire de Mlle

¹⁷⁸ Monval, 'Affaire Auzillon', p. 178.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

Auzillon', as well as one to see Colbert on the same matter.¹⁸⁰ This last journey took place on 25 June 1673. Two days after the Marais theatre had been closed down, therefore, the matter of Mlle Auzillon had still not been settled. This, then, is why Des Urlis and La Vallée did not include her in their action against the remainder of the Marais troupe. ~~By~~ ^{Having} ~~joining~~ ^{ed} the Guénégaud while the Marais theatre was still in operation did, indeed, mean that this group of actors ~~had been~~ ^{were} in breach of their acts of association. The fact that the members of the former Palais-Royal troupe were only persuaded to accept Mlle Auzillon after the Marais had been closed down by royal ordonnance and its actors forbidden to perform either there or elsewhere, which nullified these acts, meant that Mlle Auzillon could not, technically, be accused of the same offence.

It might seem surprising that La Reynie should have been so concerned at the fate of a minor actress. This was no doubt due to the value he placed upon her husband, who probably asked him to intercede on behalf of his wife. Marie Dumont, the widow of the actor Dorimond, was in 1673, married to the porter at the Marais theatre, Pierre Auzillon, formerly porter to Dorimond's company, with whom she had eloped before Dorimond's death.¹⁸¹ Auzillon may have been more than a mere porter, however, for in 1677 he was employed as an officer in the police force under La Reynie, and Thierry suggests that he may have been operating as an undercover agent as early as 1673.¹⁸² It is a sign of the trust in which Auzillon was held, that when in 1683, those women who had been convicted as part of the notorious 'Affaire des Poisons' were taken to their final place of imprisonment, he was chosen to accompany them. They

¹⁸⁰ Thierry, Documents, pp. 337-8.

¹⁸¹ Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique, p. 18.

¹⁸² Thierry, Documents, p. 341.

were taken to Belle-Ile, where security was extremely tight, as Jean-Christian Petitfils explains: 'Les précautions les plus rigoureuses furent prises pour éviter aux prisonniers tout contact avec l'extérieur. Le personnel de la citadelle, les officiers et les soldats devaient ignorer leurs noms et les causes de leur emprisonnement'.¹⁸³ The man in charge of such an operation must have been held in exceedingly high regard. Auzillon went on to become Conseiller du Roi, Guidon et Contrôleur de la Prévôté Générale de l'Ile de France, and Contrôleur de la Compagnie du Lieutenant Criminel de Robe Courte du Châtelet de Paris.¹⁸⁴

Despite having been forced to accept Mlle Auzillon, the former Palais-Royal troupe apparently continued to refuse admission to Des Urlis and La Vallée, who, presumably, were without such powerful protectors. Deir^ekauf-Holsboer suggests that the reason La Grange attempted to deny these three women a place in the new company was that if there had been a fusion of the Palais-Royal and Marais troupes in their entirety, the remainder of Molière's company would have been outnumbered. She concludes: 'Cette situation est inacceptable pour La Grange; il désire avant tout être assuré de la direction générale des affaires et voir prédominer sa troupe dans la nouvelle combinaison' (II, 197). There is, however, no evidence to support this view, which neglects the question of artistic competence as a necessary qualification in joining a company, although this is the one factor insisted upon by all the contemporary commentators.

The final list of actors and actresses belonging to the Guénégaud company when it first opened was as follows:

¹⁸³ L'Affaire des poisons: alchimistes et sorciers sous Louis XIV (Paris, 1977), p. 161.

¹⁸⁴ Archives de la Comédie-Française, Dossier Auzillon.

FROM THE MARAIS

La Roque	1 share
Verneuil	1 "
Dauvilliers	1 "
Guérin d'Estriché	1 "
Dupin	1/2 "
Mlle Dupin	1 "
Mlle Guyot	1 "
Mlle Dauvilliers	1/2 "
Mlle Auzillon	3/4 "

	7 ³ / ₄ shares

FROM THE PALAIS ROYAL

La Grange	1 share
Du Croisy	1 "
Hubert	1 "
Mlle Molière	1 "
Mlle La Grange	1/2 "
Mlle De Brie	1/2 "
De Brie	1 "
Rosimond	1 "
Mlle Aubry	1/2 "
Mlle Angélique	1/4 "

	7 ³ / ₄ shares 185

Deierkauf-Holsboer, in her analysis of these figures, persists in considering Rosimond to be a member of the Marais company, despite the fact that he had left it some two months before the merger of the two troupes was effected, and that the Marais had continued to perform without him. This leads her to conclude that in the Guénégaud troupe, there was a preponderance of actors from the Marais. She supposes this to have annoyed La Grange, though on what grounds it is difficult to say, since as she, herself, admits: 'La Grange en est si irrité qu'il n'en souffle pas mot dans son Registre' (II, 201). What is more, Deierkauf-Holsboer claims that the Guénégaud should be seen as a continuation of the Marais company, rather than of Molière's troupe, as is so often the case: 'Or, voici la vérité: le Roi a joint la compagnie énergique et expérimentée du Marais à ce qui restait de la troupe du feu Molière qui décapitée, démembrée, la plus malheureuse des trois compagnies parisiennes, a été sauvée ainsi de l'anéantissement' (II, 209). She adds, in answer to the tradition by which the Comédie-Française is known as the 'Maison de Molière', that when that company was formed in 1680, it was composed of six actors from the Hôtel de Bourgogne, six from Molière's troupe and six from the Marais theatre (II, 202).

Deierkauf-Holsboer ignores, however, the fact that by the terms of the ordonnance of 23 June 1673, the Palais-Royal troupe was allowed to continue its activity, whereas the Marais theatre was closed down and its company forbidden to perform. What is more, if Rosimond is considered to have been a member of the former Palais-Royal company in that he joined the remainder of Molière's troupe even before they had found themselves a theatre, the number of shares in the Guénégaud company was equal for the two groups at seven and three quarters each, with the Palais-Royal faction having one additional member. The addition of Sourdéac and Champeron brought the company up to a total of seventeen and a half shares. Therefore, far from either Molière's company or that of the Marais being preponderant, the Guénégaud troupe was, numerically at least, an exact and equal fusion of the two companies.

There is more to the life of a theatre company than the actors who appear on stage, and, of the back-stage and front-of-house staff whose names occur with great regularity in the Guénégaud Registres, the vast majority had been previously employed by Molière at the Palais-Royal and elsewhere. Also, a great number of the tradespeople with whom the company dealt had been used in the past by Molière and his troupe.¹⁸⁶ However, the fact that the Marais account books have been lost makes it impossible for us to determine whether the remainder of the personnel mentioned had ever been employed at that theatre. Another important factor to be considered when attempting to assess the contribution each component troupe made to the new company, is that of the individual repertoires they each brought with them. This will be examined in my section on the repertory of the Guénégaud company.

¹⁸⁶ These matters will be examined in more detail in the chapters on Administration and Production at the Guénégaud theatre, as well as in Appendix One: 'The Guénégaud Troupe, its employees and associates'..

In 1679, La Grange claimed that the Palais-Royal troupe had also made a greater financial contribution to the Guénégaud than the Marais company. At the time of the enforced closure of the Marais theatre on 23 June 1673, the troupe performing there had debts outstanding for publicity and for rent.¹⁸⁷ Also, Boursault's Germanicus had only been given twice, and the company owed the author 1,300 livres of the fee they had agreed to pay him for his work. According to La Grange, the Palais-Royal troupe paid these debts on behalf of the Marais company, and he protested most vigourously when Mlle Auzillon suggested that she had played a part in settling the debts of Molière's troupe:

dues

... le contenu en l'article est faux, que la troupe est fort accommodée et qu'elle ne devait pas le sol; au contraire ladite Dumont sait bien que l'on a payé pour elle et pour quelques autres de la troupe du Marais 1,300 livres qui étaient ~~des~~ au sieur Boursault pour le Germanicus et plusieurs autres dettes pour raison de quoi le répondant proteste.¹⁸⁸

This is manifestly untrue, for, as we have seen, when the Palais-Royal troupe took over the lease on the Guénégaud theatre on 23 May 1673, it was stated that, 'on recrutera les acteurs nécessaires, lesquels seront tenus de prendre leur charge dans la dette';¹⁸⁹ the debt in question being the 14,000 livres needed to buy out Sourdéac and Champeron. What is more, Molière's troupe owed 1,024 livres in production expenses on Le Malade imaginaire. Thierry goes so far as to suggest that, indirectly, it was the Marais company that enabled them to pay off this debt. When the Marais closed down, those members who transferred to the Guénégaud brought with them their assets, consisting of costumes, décors, machines etc. The Marais company was very rich in lead which was used for the

¹⁸⁷ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, II, 199.

¹⁸⁸ Monval, 'Affaire Auzillon', pp. 84-5.

¹⁸⁹ Bonnassies, Histoire administrative, p. 31.

counterbalance systems used to operate stage machinery. This meant that the former Palais-Royal troupe was able to sell off some 1,085 livres in weight of their own lead, thereby raising 124 livres. This, together with 400 livres borrowed from a certain M. Du Cerceau, and 500 livres remaining from the royal pension for the previous year, enabled them to pay off all their 1,024 livres debt on *Le Malade imaginaire*.¹⁹⁰ As far as the Marais's debt to Boursault is concerned, *Germanicus* was given eleven times at the Guénégaud, when, as we have seen, and on two occasions at least, money was set aside towards paying it off.

The transfer of the Marais company's décors and machines to the Guénégaud created further problems for this troupe. Catherine Des Urlis and Marie La Vallée, the two actresses who had been excluded, claimed that, as they had contributed to their purchase over the years, they were entitled to compensation. In fact, they demanded that the whole of the new company be liable to pay this, since they were all going to profit from their use. Again, the Châtelet found in favour of the two women, although this time the verdict was not entirely to their advantage. The Sentence of 4 August 1673 stated that, 'les décorations et autres choses appartenant à ladite troupe du Marais seront partagées entre les comédiens de ladite troupe par égale portion, comme aussi les dettes et les charges dont la troupe est tenue et redevable seront par eux payées en égale portion'.¹⁹¹ There is no record of any such compensation being paid. No doubt Des Urlis and La Vallée forewent their rights, believing that what they were owed would be cancelled out or worse by their share in the Marais company's debts. Nevertheless, no ill-feeling appears to have remained between the two actresses and their

¹⁹⁰ Thierry, Documents, pp. 73-82.

¹⁹¹ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, II, 324.

former comrades, for later that year, Marie La Vallée married her former colleague, La Grange's brother, Verneuil.¹⁹²

ITALIANS

To conclude our discussion of the founding of the Guénégaud theatre, it remains to say a word of the Italian actors. Molière had shared a theatre with this extremely popular company ever since his arrival in Paris in 1658. After the demolition of the Petit-Bourbon, both troupes moved to the Palais-Royal, where the Italians consistently paid their share in any modifications or improvements to be carried out. When, therefore, in 1673, Lully was awarded the use of the Palais-Royal for his Académie Royale de Musique, it was not only Molière's troupe that was dispossessed, but also the Italians. It is a sign of the favour in which they were held, however, that measures were taken to protect them. The circumstances are described in a placet au Roi on behalf of the Guénégaud company, preserved in the Archives of the Comédie-Française:

Nous supplions très humblement Votre Majesté de considérer qu'après le décès de Molière, il lui a plu donner la salle du Palais-Royal au sieur Lully, qui s'obligea en même temps de trouver un lieu pour les comédiens italiens.

M. de Colbert nous fit l'honneur de nous proposer de les recevoir dans notre lieu, comme une chose agréable à Votre Majesté....¹⁹³

As the Italian troupe was in England during this crucial period,¹⁹⁴ negotiations were carried out with Mlles Ottavia and Minatti, both

¹⁹² Mongrédien and Robert, *Dictionnaire biographique*, p. 203.

¹⁹³ Archives de la Comédie-Française, Dossier Conflits avec les Italiens.

¹⁹⁴ A warrant to admit their clothes was issued on 21 April. They asked for permission to return to Paris on 22 August, but the order for the export of their goods is dated 12 September (Sybil Rosenfeld, *Foreign Theatrical Companies in Great Britain in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (London, 1955), p. 2).

relatives of company members. A contract was drawn up and examined by the Contrôleur des Bâtiments du Roi, Perrault, in the presence of Lully and Vigarani. By this act, the Italians agreed to pay half the 2,400 livres annual rent on the Guénégaud, 'pour la jouissance des quatre murs seulement', without being liable for any part of the 30,000 livres the Palais-Royal troupe had agreed to pay Sourdéac and Champeron for the purchase of the theatre's fixtures and fittings. This act was agreed and signed on 10 June 1673, and Lully himself paid the first year's rent of 1,200 livres on behalf of the Italian troupe.¹⁹⁵ In fact, for the whole of the period the Italians performed at the Guénégaud, Lully continued to pay half their rent, that is 600 livres per annum.¹⁹⁶

This consideration shown to the Italians underlines the neglect suffered by Molière's troupe, and it is some measure of its members' determination and will to survive that they were able to endure blow after blow, find themselves a new theatre and associate themselves with new actors, so that when the Guénégaud theatre opened its doors with a performance of *Tartuffe* on 11 July 1673, it was a true and worthy continuation of and successor to both the Palais-Royal and Marais companies.

¹⁹⁵ In Lully's letter to Colbert asking for permission to carry out alterations to the Palais-Royal, he states that, among other things he is obliged 'de payer les loyers des Comédiens Italiens' (Cordey, 'Lully installe l'Opéra', p. 138).

¹⁹⁶ Dossier Les Italiens.

CHAPTER TWO - DESIGN

LOCATION

The building which in its short life from 1671 onwards had been known successively as the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille, the Académie de Musique, and now, as the Théâtre or Hôtel de Guénégaud, was situated in the Faubourg Saint-Germain. Indeed, while performing there, the combined Molière/Marais company was known as the Troupe du Roi du Faubourg Saint-Germain to distinguish it from the Troupe du Roi à l'Hôtel de Bourgogne, otherwise known as the Troupe Royale, despite the fact that, unlike the Hôtel de Bourgogne, the Guénégaud received no pension from the King.

The Faubourg Saint-Germain - by this time a faubourg in name only since the city walls had been extended to include it - was, in the second half of the seventeenth century, one of the main Parisian development areas, much as the Ile Saint-Louis had been some years earlier. This came about because a vast piece of land stretching from the rue de Seine to the rue du Bac, and from the river Seine to what are now the rue Jacob and the rue de l'Université, had belonged to the first wife of Henri IV, Marguerite de Valois. When she died in 1615, the land was sold to pay off her enormous debts. It was bought by Louis Le Barbier who undertook to redevelop it. His methods, however, differed from those employed by Christophe Marie on the Ile Saint-Louis. Instead of selling off plots of land for building, Le Barbier built the residences himself and then sold them ready to be occupied. Orest Ranum finds the fact that Barbier built both maisons and hôtels significant, indicating that he intended these residences for people of varying social and financial situations. This is corroborated by the

fact that he also established a market in the area to encourage trade to establish itself in the new faubourg.¹

Ranum sums up thus the stage this new development had reached in 1675, two years after the combined Molière/Marais troupe had moved there: 'En 1675, alors que les quais (appelés aujourd'hui Malaquais et Voltaire), la rue Bourbon (actuelle rue de Lille) et la rue de l'Université étaient bordés d'élégants hôtels appartenant à la noblesse de robe et d'épée, les rues plus au sud comptaient probablement des maisons construites pour des marchands' (p. 117). Jacques Willhelm agrees as to the social composition of the faubourg, but sees the configuration in rather different terms: 'Loti de 1615 à 1645, cet immense domaine sera coupé d'un réseau de rues régulières, les unes parallèles au fleuve et bordées peu à peu de superbes hôtels, tandis que celles qui les croisent montrent beaucoup de maisons à boutiques'.² This development did not, however, proceed entirely smoothly; for Nicolas Delamare notes in his Traité de la police that on 20 March 1668, householders in the Faubourg Saint-Germain refused to pay the taxes for street-cleaning and lighting known as 'boues et lanternes', 'sous prétexte de mauvais nettoyage, maisons non achevées de bâtir, rues non pavées, et maisons non occupées'.³ We can only suppose that the situation improved in the intervening five years, since the Guénégaud troupe regularly paid both these and other taxes.

Despite Le Barbier's attempt to ensure social diversity among the inhabitants of the new Faubourg Saint-Germain, according to Ranum the

¹ Orest Ranum, Les Parisiens au XVIIe siècle, translated by Georges Dethan (Paris, 1973; first published New York, 1968), pp. 116-7.

² Jacques Willhelm, La Vie quotidienne des Parisiens au temps du Roi Soleil 1660-1715 (Paris, 1977), p. 32.

³ Nicolas Delamare, Traité de la police, 4 vols (Paris, 1722-38), IV, 233.

magistrature was predominant.⁴ There were also in the area several 'académies de noblesse', where the sons of the nobility could practise their riding and fencing. In fact, the Faubourg Saint-Germain seems to have been a quartier very much given over to leisure pursuits, for Willhelm records that it contained more jeux de paume - establishments where one could also play cards and billiards - than any other area of Paris, as well as the best inns for travellers: 'De la rue des Saints-Pères à la place Saint-Michel, entre la rue Saint-André-des-Arts et la Seine, et autour de l'Abbaye Saint-Germain-des-Près, le guide de Blegny n'en cite pas moins d'une trentaine, avec table d'hôte à prix fixe de 15 à 40 sols par repas' (p. 31). Moreover, on grounds alongside the église Saint-Sulpice was held every year one of the two Paris fairs, which from early February until Palm Sunday attracted crowds of people into the area.

One of the most striking features of the Faubourg Saint-Germain was the large number of foreigners who lived and worked there. Encouraged presumably by the legal immunity enjoyed up to 1674 by people living on lands belonging to the abbaye Saint-Germain-des-Près, a small colony of foreign and Protestant artists sprang up near what is today the rue du Dragon. Also, in 1630, the Confrérie des Flamands, Suisses, Allemands, Italiens, Espagnols et autres de Saint-Hippolyte moved its headquarters there on account of 'la multitude d'étrangers qui habitent le beau quartier Saint-Germain'.⁵

These characteristics of the Faubourg Saint-Germain as a fashionable development area, a centre for leisure activities and of

⁴ Ranum, Parisiens, p. 126.

⁵ Ibid.

tourist attractions,⁶ would clearly have made it eminently suitable as a site for a theatre. And, while the large foreign population would probably not have been of any more significance for the Guénégaud troupe than any other potential audience, their presence in the area was of vital importance to the Italian actors with whom the Guénégaud company shared their theatre. This is demonstrated by a 'Placet au Roi' on behalf of the united Guénégaud and Hôtel de Bourgogne companies in which it is described how in 1680, when the two troupes of French actors were ordered to unite at the Guénégaud theatre to form the Comédie-Française, and the Italians were ordered to transfer to the Hôtel de Bourgogne, the King also ordered that the French actors pay the Italians 800 livres in compensation, 'en considération de ce qu'ils quittaient l'Hôtel de Guénégaud et sur les très humbles rémonstrances qu'ils firent à Votre Majesté alléguant que le quartier de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne n'étant point rempli d'étrangers comme le quartier Saint-Germain ce changement de théâtre leur porterait un préjudice considérable'.⁷ The writer adds that, once installed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, the Italians proceeded to greatly increase the French content of their plays to adapt them to their new audience, thereby impinging upon the monopoly of the French troupe.

It would seem indisputable that the location of a theatre within the city was an important factor contributing to the success or failure of the enterprise. We have already seen the Marais forced to close its doors because people were not prepared to travel so far from the city

⁶ As early as 1668, De Pure was suggesting that Parisian theatre companies should present varied programmes rather than keeping one play 'à l'affiche' until it dropped from favour, so that visitors to the city would have the opportunity to see several productions during their stay (Michel De Pure, Idée des spectacles (Paris, 1668), p. 175.

⁷ Dossier Les Italiens.

centre and into such a rundown district to go to the theatre. This shows how the dynamics of the capital had changed as it expanded slowly westwards. Thirty years earlier, when Molière and his fellow members of the Illustre Théâtre established their first theatre in the capital at the Jeu de Paume des Mestayers, that too was in the rue Mazarine, only a few hundred yards from what was later to become the Guénégaud theatre.⁸ This venture survived only from September 1643 to December 1644, when, evidently believing that the location of their theatre accounted for its lack of popularity, the company leased another jeu de paume, La Croix Noire, situated on the banks of the Seine almost opposite the Pont Marie, despite the fact that the rents were higher and that they had to go to the expense of building a new theatre within the jeu de paume.⁹ Thus, in 1644, the Illustre Théâtre failed in what is now the sixth arrondissement and moved to the fourth, whereas in 1673, the Marais theatre failed in what is now the fourth arrondissement and the greater part of the company moved to the sixth.

Unfortunately, there exists no plan of the Guénégaud theatre. Nutter and Thoinan have, however, succeeded in establishing its exact location at 42, rue Mazarine, opposite the rue Guénégaud, and running lengthways along what is now the rue J. Callot, where the Passage du Pont-Neuf used to be situated. They also reproduce a plan of the building on that site drawn up before 1849, which they believe gives some indication as to the disposition of the theatre, together with a plan showing its supposed location.¹⁰

⁸ August Vitu, Le Jeu de Paume des Mestayers ou l'Illustre Théâtre 1595-1883 (Paris, 1883), pp. 11-2.

⁹ Léon Chancerel, 'Architecture et décoration', Prospero, 3 (1945), pp. 6-7.

¹⁰ Nutter and Thoinan, Origines, pp. 146-8.

Jules Bonnassies in his Notice historique sur les anciens bâtiments de la Comédie-Française, describes the site of the theatre as it was in 1868:

Ces comédiens, sous la direction de la veuve du grand homme, s'établissent dans la salle que le marquis de Sourdéac avait construite rue Mazarine, en face de la rue Guénégaud (n° 42) et dont les murs, qui subsistent, ainsi que des vestiges des loges, de la scène et des magasins, renferment les ateliers d'un gazier. Le n° 44 contenait les loges des acteurs. Il existe encore en entier: on y remarque l'entrée des artistes, à droite dans le passage.¹¹

JEUX DE PAUME

When we consider that the first two homes of the Paris Opera, as well as those of Molière's Illustre Théâtre and of the Marais company, were converted tennis courts or jeux de paume, and that when the Hôtel de Bourgogne was constructed it was in the jeu de paume style, it will be seen that this game had a considerable influence on theatre design in France in the seventeenth century. Jeu de paume had been fashionable in France from the Middle Ages onwards, but by the beginning of the seventeenth century was starting to lose popularity. There have been widely varying estimates of how many jeu de paume establishments there were in Paris at this time, ranging from the contemporary fourteen to eighteen hundred to the more conservative modern figure of two hundred and fifty.¹² It was evidently a considerable number, and, given the decline in the popularity of the game, many were no longer being put to the use for which they had been constructed.

¹¹ Jules Bonnassies, Comédie-Française: notice historique sur les anciens bâtiments (Paris, 1868), p. 6. At the time of writing, number 42, which bears a plaque identifying it as the site of the first Parisian opera house, now houses a restaurant on the ground floor and is residential above; number 44 seems almost entirely residential, with a school of book-binding on the first floor.

¹² William L. Wiley, The Early Public Theatre in France (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), p. 159.

In contrast, at the beginning of the seventeenth century there was only one purpose-built theatre in Paris, constructed by the Confrérie de la Passion in 1548 and known as the Hôtel de Bourgogne. The Confrérie had possessed the monopoly on the production of religious mystery plays in Paris from the early fifteenth century onwards, and it was for the public performance of such works that they had their theatre built. In November 1548, however, a royal edict was issued prohibiting any further productions of 'mystères sacrés' on the grounds that they had come to contain too great a mixture of secular and sacred material. Nevertheless, the Confrérie continued in possession of the monopoly on 'histoires profanes' to which the royal edict did not apply, and as this was interpreted as referring to all non-religious plays, the Confrérie effectively continued to hold the monopoly on all dramatic activity in the capital.¹³

In practical terms, this meant that no troupe could present plays in any hall other than that belonging to the Confrérie, for which they had to pay a considerable rent. If they did perform elsewhere, either with the Confrérie's permission, as when the Hôtel de Bourgogne was already occupied, or else because they chose to disregard the regulations, they either had to pay the Confrérie a token rent for the Hôtel de Bourgogne or were liable to be fined.¹⁴ The Confrérie was maintained in this monopoly by a succession of royal edicts right up to the seventeenth century.

For the many new troupes which were springing up at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, in the more relaxed atmosphere reigning in the capital and elsewhere following the

¹³ William L. Wiley, 'The Hôtel de Bourgogne: another look at France's first public theatre', Studies in Philology, 70 (1973), pp. 1-114, (pp. 3-5).

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 6.

end of the wars of religion and the accession to the throne of Henri IV in 1589, this was an extremely difficult and confusing situation. As only one company could occupy the Hôtel de Bourgogne at any one time, and as the rent demanded by the Confrérie was prohibitive (240 livres per month during the period 1615-20),¹⁵ these young companies had little choice but to break the law. They did this by hiring courtyards and, more importantly, jeux de paume for their performances, running the risk of paying the penalty if they were found out and prosecuted. That such prosecutions ^C occurred shows how jealous the Confrérie was of its monopoly. Indeed, it went so far as to attempt to ensure that such breaches could not occur. For example, on 13 October 1621, a certain Estienne Robin, the keeper of a jeu de paume on the rue du Bourg-l'Abbé, was forbidden to rent his establishment to any company of actors, with the stipulation that if he did, the stage and any other dramatic installation would be ripped out. This edict was made more general when, on 4 March 1622, Robin and 'all other keepers of jeux de paume' were prohibited from renting their indoor courts to acting companies.¹⁶

So, what was a jeu de paume, and what made it so suitable as a theatrical venue? Evidence as to a jeu de paume's external appearance is provided by an enlargement dated 1615 by the royal civil engineer and draughtsman, Vellefaux, of a section of the 1609 Quesnel map of Paris, showing a segment of the rue de Vaugirard and the area around what is now the Palais de Luxembourg. Many jeux de paume were situated here, and six are visible on the Vellefaux drawing, including the Jeu de Paume de Becquet in which Lully founded his Académie Royale de Musique.¹⁷

¹⁵ Wiley, 'Hôtel de Bourgogne', p. 10.

¹⁶ Wiley, Early Public Theatre, pp. 154-5.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 160.

From the drawing, we see that a jeu de paume was a long, narrow, rectangular building (according to W.L. Wiley, a three to one ratio of length to width was standard),¹⁸ that could either be covered by a roof or else left open. Of the six jeux de paume shown, one is in the process of construction, two are open and are designated as 'tripots', and three are covered by roofs shown in red on the plan.¹⁹ A jeu de paume did not necessarily front directly onto the street, but could be positioned behind another building which did: a shop or house for example. In such cases, access was by means of doors or gateways which did not usually require entrance to the building behind which the jeu de paume was situated. From these entrances, passages ran the length of the jeu de paume on one or both sides, giving access to the doors of the tennis court itself. Between the front building and the jeu de paume small courtyards were often positioned to help alleviate congestion when gateways and passages were crowded with people.²⁰

More information concerning the jeux de paume shown on the Vellefaux drawing is provided by a companion document: a plan of some of the lots and buildings in the same Luxembourg or Fief du Clos au Bourgeois district, done in scale and measured in toises. This has enabled the exact dimensions of some of the Vellefaux jeux de paume to be calculated. It has been deduced that the external passages along the outside of the buildings were some 6 to 8 feet wide (1.8 to 2.4

¹⁸ Wiley, 'Hôtel de Bourgogne', p. 27.

¹⁹ Wiley, Early Public Theatre, p. 164.

²⁰ Ibid.

m.),²¹ and that the courtyards were roughly 12 by 20 feet (3.6 x 6.1 m.). One of the jeux de paume shown measures exactly 90 by 30 feet (27.4 x 9.1 m.), and another, the Jeu de Paume du Mont-Gaillard owned by M. Picart, is about 95 feet by 28 feet (29 x 8.5 m.). The plan also suggests that on one side of a jeu de paume were two entrance doors giving onto the side passage, each approximately 30 feet (9.1 m.) from the ends of the building.²²

Another jeu de paume about which we have a certain amount of information is that occupied by Molière and the Illustre Théâtre in the rue Mazarine, the Jeu de Paume des Mestayers. This building measured 96 pieds by 36 pieds on the outside (102.3 x 38.4 ft., 31.2 x 11.7 m.), and 90 pieds by 30 pieds on the inside (95.9 x 32 ft., 29.2 x 9.7 m.).²³ The area in front of the jeu de paume on the rue Mazarine side was paved, and access to the building was by means of a passage running the length of the jeu de paume from the rue Mazarine to the rue de Seine, 11 pieds at its widest point (11.7 ft., 3.6 m.), and 7 pieds at its narrowest (7.5 ft., 2.3 m.). A well was situated in a small courtyard at the widest point of this passage, and a single door formed the entrance to the jeu de paume, positioned in the centre of the side wall, after which the passage narrowed towards the rue Mazarine.

²¹ In the seventeenth century, the standard units of measurement were pieds and toises, there being six pieds to the toise. The seventeenth-century pied was roughly, but not exactly, equal to the modern English foot, being slightly larger: 1.066 feet. Where necessary, therefore, measurements in pieds and toises have been translated into English feet, and metric equivalents are also given.

²² Wiley, Early Public Theatre, pp. 165-6.

²³ For the Jeu de Paume des Mestayers, Wiley gives an external measurement of 105 x 37 ft. ('Hôtel de Bourgogne', p. 33) and an internal measurement of 90 x 30 ft. (Early Public Theatre, p. 166). He does not say how these figures have been arrived at, but for the latter measurement is clearly confusing seventeenth-century pieds with English feet.

The Jeu de Paume des Mestayers was 34 pieds high (36.2 ft., 11.0 m.), and, although roofed, its walls were only 20 pieds high (21.3 ft., 6.5 m.), the last 14 pieds (14.9 ft., 4.5 m.) consisting solely of beams supporting the roof, allowing light, as well as wind and rain to enter the structure.²⁴

It is interesting to compare the dimensions of these jeux de paume with those of other seventeenth-century theatre buildings. There has been much debate as to the exact size and interior disposition of the Hôtel de Bourgogne.²⁵ Wiley, after considering all the arguments, asserts that 'henceforth there should be general acceptance of the maximum size of the Hôtel de Bourgogne - which was for non-metric audiences, around 109 by 44 feet' (33.2 x 13.4 m.).²⁶ This was approximately the same length as a standard jeu de paume, though somewhat wider. Jeux de paume did, in fact, vary in size. According to Auguste Vitu, a particularly large example was the court built by

²⁴ Vitu, Mestayers, pp. 39-41.

²⁵ The major contributions to this debate consist, briefly, of: Jean Lemoine, La Première du 'Cid', (Paris, 1936); Charles Niemeyer, 'The Hôtel de Bourgogne: France's first popular playhouse', Theatre Annual, 7 (1947), pp. 64-80; Deierkauf-Holsboer, Mise en scène; Donald H. Roy, 'La Scène de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne', Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre, 14 (1962), pp. 227-35; Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne; David V. Illingworth, 'Documents inédits et nouvelles précisions sur le Théâtre de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne', Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre, 22 (1970), pp. 125-32; André Villiers, 'L'Ouverture de la scène à l'Hôtel de Bourgogne', Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre, 22 (1970), pp. 133-41; David V. Illingworth, 'L'Hôtel de Bourgogne: une salle de théâtre "à l'italienne" à Paris en 1647?', Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre, 23 (1971), pp. 40-9; Wiley, 'Hôtel de Bourgogne'; Graham F. Barlow, 'The Hôtel de Bourgogne according to Sir James Thornhill', Theatre Research International, 1 (1976), pp. 86-98; and C. M. Fogarty, 'A Reconstruction of the interior of the Hôtel de Bourgogne', Maske und Kothurn, 26 (1980), pp. 1-15.

Henri IV in the Louvre which measured 114 pieds by 38 pieds (121.5 x 40.5 ft., 37 x 12.3 m.).²⁷

Unlike the Hôtel de Bourgogne, the first Marais theatre actually was a jeu de paume, for, after occupying three different jeux de paume in the Marais area of Paris (De Berthault, De la Sphère and De la Fontaine), Charles Le Noir and Montdory transferred their company in 1634 to a large, covered jeu de paume on the Vieille rue du Temple, which they transformed into a permanent theatre.²⁸ Unfortunately, on 15 January 1644, after almost ten years of occupation, this theatre burned to the ground. Undeterred, the company immediately elected to rebuild their theatre on the same plot of land, and construction was completed on 3 June 1644. According to a record drawn up by the architect Garengeau, the dimensions of this new building were 17 toises 4 pieds by 6 toises (113 x 38.4 ft.; 34.4 x 11.7 m.).²⁹ Wiley believes that 'the renovated Théâtre du Marais was most likely constructed with outer walls enclosing the original jeu de paume', concluding, therefore, that 'the interior dimensions of the new building were the same as the exterior of the old hall'.³⁰ The measurements he quotes, however, are Garengeau's external dimensions of the new hall, and, if we follow Wiley's own

²⁷ Vitu, Mestayers, p. 40. Graham Barlow, in his study of the transformation of London tennis courts into theatres ('From Tennis Court to Theatre', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Glasgow, 1983), maintains that there were two types of jeu de paume: dedans, with external measurements of 112 ft. 9 in. by 42 ft. 4 in. (34.4 x 12.9 m.); and quarrées, with external measurements of 106 ft. 4 in. by 42 ft. 4 in. (32.4 x 12.9 m.). The playing courts, however, were the same in each case; the different dimensions of the buildings depending upon the arrangement of galleries for the spectators (p. 75). However, from the figures quoted in the text above, it will be seen that there was, in fact, considerable variation in the dimensions of Parisian jeux de paume.

²⁸ Wiley, Early Public Theatre, p. 171. (Marais, I, 107).

²⁹ Lemoine, Première, p. 30.

³⁰ Early Public Theatre, p. 174.

argument, the dimensions of the old hall must have been somewhat smaller.³¹ If little debate is possible as to the external dimensions of the rebuilt Marais of 1644, Deierkauf-Holsboer's previously widely accepted theory as to its internal disposition has recently been persuasively challenged by John Golder.³² The differences between their two views will be discussed in the relevant sections on the Guénégaud auditorium.

As far as the interior of a jeu de paume is concerned, a good idea of what one would have looked like can be gained from the engraving accompanying the 1632 Charles Hulpeau publication of the rules of the game. Here we see that the floor of a jeu de paume was flagged with stone - most often hard, polished pierre de Caen. Along one side of the building shown runs a gallery at ground level for spectators. Above this, an open space below the roof line can be seen, together with the wooden beams and pillars supporting the roof structure. When the court was being put to its original purpose this gap would have been closed with netting to prevent the loss of balls. Side doors suggested in the Clos au Bourgeois plan are not visible in the Hulpeau engraving, but rather a single door at one extremity of the building.³³

Given this basic disposition, it is not surprising that in the search for performance spaces, newly-formed theatrical companies turned to the increasingly deserted jeux de paume. With the minimum of time and expense the spectators' gallery could be adapted to form a row of ground-floor boxes and a rudimentary scaffolding stage erected at one

³¹ Deierkauf-Holsboer, too, in her Théâtre du Marais, gives the measurements of the original jeu de paume as being identical to those recorded by Garengeau (I, 107).

³² 'The Théâtre du Marais in 1644: a new look at the old evidence concerning France's second public theatre', Theatre Survey, 25 (November 1984), pp. 127-52.

³³ Wiley, Early Public Theatre, pp. 166-7.

end of the building. With slightly more effort, a second gallery or row of boxes could be erected above the original spectators' gallery, and even a similar construction attached to the opposite side of the building.³⁴ Such temporary installations were ideal for touring companies in the provinces, moving from town to town and taking the basic elements of their theatre with them, as well as for the early Parisian companies who ran the risk of having their theatres destroyed at any time at the instigation of the Confrérie. Indeed, as we have seen, it remained the custom throughout the seventeenth century for any company changing theatre to take all fixtures and fittings with them. As the seventeenth century progressed, however, and the power of the Confrérie waned, Parisian troupes became more confident as to their undisturbed occupation of a theatre and so began to risk more permanent installations, building boxes and galleries, parterres and amphithéâtres, as well as permanent stages, backstage and front-of-house facilities. It is to this period that the Illustre Théâtre's adaptation of the Mestayers and Montdory and Le Noir's adaptation of the Marais belong.

JEU DE PAUME DE LA BOUTEILLE

Some idea of the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille, later the Guénégaud theatre, as it existed in its primitive form can be gained from the lease passed on 8 October 1670 between Sourdéac and Champeron on the one hand, and Maximilien de Laffemas, acting for the heirs of Isaac de Laffemas, the proprietors of the jeu de paume on the other, when the former leased the building on Perrin's behalf to found the Académie de Musique. What is more, since it is carefully specified in the lease what structural alterations Sourdéac and Champeron might be permitted to

³⁴ Ibid., p. 167.

carry out, this document, reproduced by Arthur Pougin in Les Vrais Créateurs de l'Opéra français, gives us vital clues as to how they intended to convert the jeu de paume into a theatre. Sourdéac and Champeron hired the jeu de paume itself:

... où est pour enseigne la Bouteille, 16 rue des Fossés de Nesle, ayant sortie par la rue de Seine, ledit jeu de paume clos de murs, couvert de tuile, garni de ses auges, au pourtour de charpenterie, galerie dans ledit jeu d'un côté couvert d'ais, les murs d'appui de pierre de taille avec de petites colonnes de charpenterie qui portent le couvert de ladite galerie, icelui jeu de paume pavé de pierres de Caen....³⁵

From this we see that the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille possessed all the features of a standard jeu de paume: a hard stone floor, a tile roof, and a spectators' gallery along one side of the building, itself roofed to allow the ball to bounce back into play.

Sourdéac and Champeron also hired two courtyards, as well as the two houses behind which the jeu de paume was situated: 'deux cours au côté dudit jeu et deux corps de logis ayant face sur ladite rue, appliqués au rez-de-chaussée, à salles à cheminée, allée de passage et cuisine, écurie ou appentis, plusieurs étages au nombre de trois, chambres à cheminée et grenier au-dessus, monté dans oeuvre, leurs aisances, appartenances et dépendances ' (p. 299). Even so, it would seem that the space available to Sourdéac and Champeron was insufficient for their requirements, for they also leased:

... partie de la place du chantier du côté de la rue de Seine, occupé par M^e Levasseur, maître charron à Paris, à prendre quatre toises et un pied du devant du mur dudit jeu de paume ci-devant déclaré, jusques au dehors du mur que lesdits sieurs preneurs pourront faire faire à leur dépens, pour séparer ledit chantier d'avec ladite place; lequel mur sera fait en l'étendue dudit chantier et de pareille construction en épaisseur que ceux dudit jeu, jusques à la

³⁵ Arthur Pougin, Les Vrais Créateurs de l'Opéra français (Paris, 1881), p. 299.

hauteur des autres murs dudit jeu, ainsi qu'ils sont à présent.... (p. 299)

The leasing of this extra portion of land is explained by the fact that Sourdéac and Champeron intended to extend the jeu de paume at the rue de Seine end of the property once the dividing wall between their land and what remained of the wheelwright's workshop had been built:

... au-dessus duquel mur lesdits sieurs preneurs pourront faire faire telle élévation bonne leur semblera, soit de maçonnerie que de charpenterie pour porter la charpente et couverture du comble qu'ils désirent faire, le tout à leur dépens; et pourront aussi lesdits sieurs preneurs élever telle quantité de travées dudit jeu de paume que bon leur semblera pour leur commodité, en faisant servir par eux les bois qui se trouveront bons et en mettant de neufs au défaut, même en faisant par eux faire la couverture et fournissant le fer qu'il conviendra, et sans être dit par ledit sieur bailleur, ès dits noms, tenu de faire mettre aucun bois en ce qui se trouverait pourri ou rompu en l'endroit où ils feront lesdits élévations, pour la construction d'un théâtre qu'ils entendent faire faire du côté dudit chantier, pour les représentations en musique nommées opéras, en conséquence de la permission et privilège qu'ils en ont obtenu par les lettres patentes de Sa Majesté, sous le nom du sieur Perrin, le 28 juin 1669.... (p. 299)

As this was the end of the building at which the stage was to be situated, and as the lease stresses the height of the new structure Sourdéac and Champeron wished to build, it would seem clear that they intended to adapt the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille specifically so as to be suitable for Perrin's operatic productions in which spectacle was to play such an important part. Thus, the additional elevation would allow for the manipulation of complicated stage machinery, flying machines for example, as well as, possibly, an upper stage level. Thus, the 'travées' mentioned in the lease could either have been supporting the new roof, or else the galleries from which the machines were operated. It is clear that the work to be carried out was considerable, no doubt on account of the dilapidated condition into which the jeu de paume had fallen,

since Sourdéac and Champeron were to be responsible for replacing any rotten or broken beams. One final note of interest as far as the troubled early history of opera in France is concerned is that here we see for the first time Sourdéac and Champeron asserting their right to the privilège for the production of musical theatre, claiming that Perrin had merely acted as an intermediary on their behalf, and this as early as October 1670, before the Académie de Musique had even been set up.

As for the dimensions of the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille, we can make some attempt to calculate them since we know that when operating as a theatre the Guénégaud's stage measured 30 pieds (32 ft., 9.75 m.) in width, and that this would have approximately equalled the width of the parterre or standing area situated immediately in front of it.³⁶ Flanking the parterre were two rows of boxes running the length of the auditorium on either side. Such boxes were generally 4 pieds (8.5 ft., 2.6 m.) deep, seating eight spectators in two rows of four.³⁷ Allowing 30 pieds (32 ft., 9.75 m.) for the width of the stage, and 8 pieds (8.5 ft., 2.6 m.) for the depth of the boxes on either side of the auditorium, the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille cannot have had a total width of less than 38 pieds (40.5 ft., 12.3 m.), and possibly more if we consider that there must have been in existence passages at the rear of

³⁶ This has been calculated from a 'maquette de décoration' produced by the painter Pizzoli for the revival of Psyché at the Guénégaud theatre in 1684, preserved in the Archives of the Comédie-Française, which shows the scale to which it was drawn measured in toises (Nutter and Thoinan, Origines, pp. 147-8.).

³⁷ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, I, 195; Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 351.

each row of side boxes giving access to them.³⁸ If we allow 2 pieds (2.1 ft., 0.6 m.) for each of these passages,³⁹ this gives us a total width of 42 pieds (44.8 ft., 13.6 m.), almost identical to that of the Hôtel de Bourgogne. According to Wiley, a three to one ratio of length to width was standard in a jeu de paume. The original Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille must, therefore, have had a length measurement in the region of 114 to 126 pieds (121.5 to 134.3 ft., 37 to 41 m.), to which we can add the 25 pieds (26.6 ft., 8.1 m.) of the extension to the building carried out by Sourdéac and Champeron. The total length of the Guénégaud theatre building must, therefore, have been between 139 and 151 pieds (148.1 and 161 ft., 45.2 m. and 49 m.). This is much longer than the average jeu de paume theatre, but of this length, at least 8.5 toises (54.4 ft., 16.6 m.) would have been occupied by the stage, and probably more, for it should be remembered that Sourdéac and Champeron's extension to the building was carried out specifically to allow for the construction of a commodious stage and backstage area to make the theatre suitable for spectacular productions, and as Wiley notes, 'in a longer theatre the stage would be expected to be deeper and was so in several known cases'.⁴⁰

³⁸ According to John Golder in his re-analysis of the documents pertaining to the interior of the Marais, this theatre, too, had two parallel rows of side boxes and a stage 6 toises wide, but all contained within a building itself only 6 toises wide ('Théâtre du Marais', p. 137). This cannot have been the case at the Guénégaud because of the presence on-stage of loges d'avant-scène.

³⁹ This is the depth allowed by Donald Roy in his reconstruction of the interior of the Hôtel de Bourgogne ('Scène de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne', p. 231) and by John Golder ('Théâtre du Marais', p. 137). The 'Mémoire' of work to be carried out at the Marais in 1644, states that these passages should be 'd'un pied et demi au moindre endroit' (Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, I, 195).

⁴⁰ Wiley, Early Public Theatre, p. 182. The evidence on which this estimate of the depth of the stage at the Guénégaud is based will be discussed in the section devoted to that part of the theatre.

Of the interior of the projected opera house, it was stated in the lease that, 'lesdits sieurs preneurs feront faire à leur dépens, dans lesdits lieux, telles loges amphithéâtre et autres accommodements que bon leur semblera, en rétablissant par eux les dégradations qui se trouveront faites auxdits murs, lorsqu'ils sortiront desdits lieux' (pp. 299-30). Sourdéac and Champeron subsequently declared that to create the first Parisian opera house, 'il a fallu louer un lieu propre et des maisons joignantes, il a fallu construire une salle, un théâtre, des amphithéâtres, des loges, exhausser des bâtiments, en construire des neufs, creuser plus de vingt pieds en terre pour les mouvements des machines et ajuster toutes choses pour les décorations'.⁴¹ These excavations would have been necessary to allow for the installation of the counterbalance systems used to operate the stage machinery, as well as providing useful cellarage and storage space. One of the most striking features of this statement is Sourdéac and Champeron's use of the term amphithéâtre in the plural, thereby implying that there existed more than one in their opera house.

As we have seen, according to Jullien and Boislisle, both Sourdéac and Champeron's new opera house in the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille, and that of Lully in the Jeu de Paume de Becquet, were, improbably, designed and built by Henri Guichard.⁴² The interior decoration of the new theatre in the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille was carried out by Charles Herault, Peintre du Roi en Son Académie Royale, Florentin Damoisellet and Guillaume de Souzières, both Maîtres Peintres à Paris. This is known from the fact that their names appear on a quittance for four hundred livres, received in part payment of their fee. The total

⁴¹ Causes et moyens d'opposition pour le Marquis de Sourdéac et le Sieur de Champeron, Archives de la Comédie-Française, quoted in Nutter and Thoinan, Origines, p. 144.

⁴² Jullien, 'Salles de l'Opéra', p. 440; Boislisle, 'Débuts', p. 10.

sum spent on the interior decoration of the theatre, however, is not known.⁴³

FROM OPERA HOUSE TO THEATRE

Upon Lully's purchase of the privilège for the production of operas in August 1672, Sourdéac and Champeron found themselves, as we have seen, only two years into their five year lease, banned from producing operas themselves, and in possession of a theatre which it was forbidden for them to rent to any company of actors then operating in Paris. They did not, however, restore the property to its original state as they were obliged to do under the terms of the lease if ever they decided to quit it. Instead, they seem to have maintained the theatre in such a state as to be fit for almost immediate operation if ever this ordonnance were revoked, as, indeed, it was the following year. This is indicated by the fact that, at the same time as renting the theatre building to the remaining members of Molière's company on 23 May 1673, Sourdéac and Champeron also sold to them outright 'le théâtre, orchestre, machines, mouvements, cordages, contrepoids, peintures et généralement toutes choses dépendantes et servant à l'usage des théâtres et représentations'.⁴⁴ Not only was the stage maintained ready for performance, but also the auditorium, since the Guénégaud troupe in one of its placets against the Italian actors describe the thirty thousand livres it paid to Sourdéac and Champeron as having been 'pour l'achat dudit théâtre, loges et machines'.⁴⁵

The Guénégaud company must, therefore, have been singularly well-equipped in their new theatre, since La Reynie's ordonnance of 23 June

⁴³ Nutter and Thoinan, Origines, p. 146.

⁴⁴ Bonnassies, Histoire administrative, p. 27.

⁴⁵ Dossier Les Italiens.

1673 permitting the former Palais-Royal troupe to transfer to the Guénégaud, contains a clause allowing it 'à cette fin d'y faire transporter les loges, théâtre, décorations et autres ouvrages étant dans la salle dudit Palais-Royal'.⁴⁶ That the scenery at least was transported from one theatre to another, we know from an 'Extrait de l'état de la recette et dépense faite par M. Hubert par ordre de la compagnie', reproduced by Thierry in his Documents sur le 'Malade imaginaire', which includes a payment of 1 livre 10 sols 'à un charetier qui a mené la décoration pour jouer la première fois dans le lieu' (p. 338). The remainder of the décors were transferred in bulk, for the Guénégaud company's account books record on 17 September 1673, a payment of 38 livres 10 sols 'pour trente voyages de charrette pour porter les décorations du Palais-Royal' (R I, 33).

There is, however, no reference in the company's account books to the transportation to the Guénégaud of fixtures and fittings from the auditorium of the Palais-Royal, although this was equally permitted by the terms of La Reynie's ordonnance. In fact, it is probable that having purchased them, the Guénégaud troupe utilized with certain modifications those fixtures and fittings which Sourdéac and Champeron had installed in the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille just two years earlier. Even so, it is likely that the fittings from the Palais-Royal were still transferred to the Guénégaud, possibly even being included under the blanket term 'décorations'. We have seen that it was the custom for any seventeenth-century theatrical company changing premises to take all fixtures and fittings with them because they provided an admirable source of wood and iron - in demand for the construction of décors, stage and seats. Thus, when Molière's company was evicted from

⁴⁶ Eugène Lintilhac, Histoire générale du théâtre en France, 5 vols (Paris, 1904-11), III, 12.

the Petit-Bourbon theatre in 1660, and transferred its activity to the Palais-Royal, they took with them 'les loges du Bourbon et autres choses nécessaires pour leur nouvel établissement'.⁴⁷ The wood and iron from these was used to build two new rows of boxes to be installed in the ruined Palais-Royal auditorium. Details of their construction are given in a contract between menuisier, Denis Buret, and company member, Du Croisy. This also makes provision for:

... toutes les démolitions de bois de charpenteries et autres et gros fer qui proviendront des loges du Petit-Bourbon, qui appartiendront audit entrepreneur et qu'il pourra employer à faire les ouvrages contenus audit devis, à la réserve des planches qui sont auxdits loges de Bourbon qui demeureront audit sieur Du Croisy, et laquelle démolition sera faite par ledit entrepreneur....⁴⁸

If certain planks were held back by Du Croisy, it was no doubt because they were suitable either for use in the construction of décors, or for repairs to the theatre auditorium. Upon removal to the Guénégaud, as no new seating seems to have been required, the wood from these Palais-Royal boxes would probably have been put to a similar use. The remaining members of Molière's company also, as we have seen, took with them to the Guénégaud the chandeliers from the Palais-Royal. It is stated in the third act passed before Maîtres Beaufort and Gigault on 23 May 1673, by which the actors leased the Guénégaud from Sourdéac and Champeron, that: 'Les Comédiens déclarent apporter au profit commun de tous les intéressés, dix lustres de cristal qu'ils avaient au Palais-Royal et toutes les décorations qui leur appartiennent.'⁴⁹

⁴⁷ La Grange, Registre, I, 26.

⁴⁸ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, pp. 353-4.

⁴⁹ Bonnassies, Histoire administrative, p. 30. In fact, only eight of these chandeliers appear ever to have been used at the Guénégaud.

Not only did the Guénégaud troupe possess the fixtures and fittings of the Palais-Royal as well as those of their new theatre, they also inherited the décors and machines which had previously belonged to the Marais company. This, as we have seen, greatly displeased Catherine Desurlis and Marie La Vallée, who had contributed to their purchase while acting at the Marais, but who had not been allowed to join the Guénégaud troupe.

AUDITORIUM

Evidence

Having discussed the location of the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille, its primitive form, its transformation into an opera house, and, finally, into a theatre, we will now attempt to determine the disposition of its auditorium, stage, front-of-house and backstage facilities. The documents on which these conclusions are based are the Guénégaud company's account books and the records of their legal disputes with the Italian actors with whom they shared their theatre, and with their machinistes, Sourdéac and Champeron, preserved in the Archives of the Comédie-Française; together with ~~a~~ two engravings believed to show a portion of the Guénégaud stage, and three contemporary descriptions of the theatre and its auditorium.

The first of the engravings in question features in a brochure entitled Le Cabinet des Beaux-Arts, attributed sometimes to Charles and sometimes to Claude Perrault, and published in Paris by Edelinck in 1690. It was engraved by Pierre Le Paultre, and is partially based on a painting by a certain Alexandre, presumably dating from some years earlier, since the only artist of that name known to have been working in the second half of the seventeenth century was Julien Alexandre, born

in 1653, and who died in 1679.⁵⁰ The engraving shows a section of the stage on which a scene is being performed, the area above the stage complete with chandeliers, and those members of the audience immediately in front of the stage, in boxes to the side of the stage, and seated on benches in front of these boxes.⁵¹ It is the existence of these boxes and benches that has led Barbara Mittman to suggest that the stage depicted might be that of the Guénégaud, which she believes to have been the sole Parisian theatre to possess these facilities at this time.⁵² According to Jacques Heuzey, the scene illustrated is from Cinna, showing as it does two characters seated on stage, one in a high-backed chair and the other on a stool in an attitude of profound respect (p. 21). If so, this enables us to fix the date of Alexandre's painting more exactly (supposing, of course, that the painting did present an actual theatrical reality), since Cinna was only introduced into the repertory of the Guénégaud company on 28 September 1679, and was only performed three times as part of the 1679-80 season (R VII, 86, 89, 108). If, however, we presume that Alexandre did not produce this work in the year of his death, we are obliged to conclude that his painting

⁵⁰ Jacques Heuzey, 'Du costume et de la décoration tragique au XVII^e siècle: à propos d'une gravure du XVII^e siècle représentant une scène de Cinna', Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre, 12 (1960), pp. 20-33 (p. 21).

⁵¹ This engraving has been reproduced both by Heuzey, 'Du costume', p. 24; and by Jacques Vanuxem, 'Le décor de théâtre au temps de Louis XIV', XVII^e Siècle, 39 (1958), pp. 196-217 (p. 208).

⁵² Barbara G. Mittman, 'Cinq documents portant sur l'enceinte de la balustrade de l'Ancienne Comédie', Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre, 35 (1983), pp. 174-89 (p. 175).

depicted not the Guénégaud but rather the Hôtel de Bourgogne, where Cinna was in repertory from 1677 onwards.⁵³

There exists a second, slightly different version of the Le Paultre engraving entitled 'Melpomène', executed by H. Bonnart and published by Mariette in a series on the Nine Muses.⁵⁴ As far as the depiction of the stage area is concerned, this is a mirror image of the Le Paultre engraving to which several changes have been made. Certain of these concern the dress of the spectators, and a study of the womens' headresses has enabled Heuzey to assert that the Mariette engraving cannot have been produced prior to 1690, and that the Le Paultre engraving is, therefore, anterior to it (pp. 20-1). Other changes have been made as a result of an alteration in the shape of the engraving: Le Paultre's had an arched form which has been enlarged by Bonnart to produce a rectangle, thereby revealing rather more of the above-stage area and the stage-boxes. The Mariette engraving has been reproduced by Oscar G. Brockett in his History of the Theatre, in which he states categorically that the theatre depicted is the Guénégaud.⁵⁵ We must be cautious, however, of placing too much reliance on what is revealed in this second engraving as opposed to the first, since it was produced some three years after the Guénégaud had closed its doors, and since the engraver may simply have used his imagination to fill the gaps the new form imposed instead of striving to provide an exact representation of a now defunct theatre building.

⁵³ Cinna was one of twenty-five plays performed by the Troupe Royale during the course of a royal divertissement at Fontainebleau in October 1677. This leads us to suppose that it formed part of the repertory of the Hôtel de Bourgogne company at this time. See, Mercure galant (October 1677), pp. 201-2.

⁵⁴ Heuzey, 'Du costume', p. 20; Mittman, 'Cinq documents', p. 175.

⁵⁵ Oscar G. Brockett, History of the Theatre (Boston, 1968; fourth edition 1982), p. 272.

Written descriptions of the Guénégaud theatre are almost as rare as pictorial representations. De Visé and Chappuzeau tell us simply that the theatre was large and beautiful and ideally suited to the production of machine plays, despite the fact that at their time of writing none had, as yet, been performed there. De Visé, describing the early successes of the Guénégaud company, writes in Le Mercure galant of 1674:

Les nombreuses assemblées qui l'ont honorée depuis qu'elle a remonté sur le théâtre, ont avoué haut qu'on ne peut jouer la comédie avec plus de justesse; c'est ce qui leur attire presque tout ce qu'il y a de bons auteurs, dont on verra cet hiver briller les pièces sur le théâtre, que chacun admire pour sa beauté, et sur lequel on peut faire de grandes choses, celui qui l'a fait construire à ce dessein, étant non seulement illustre par sa naissance, mais par ses lumières particulières, qui font parler de lui par toute la terre. (pp. 259-60)

This reference to the Marquis de Sourdéac, famous for his production of Pierre Corneille's La Toison d'or at Neubourg in 1660, and for his part in the establishment of the Paris Opera, as well as for his disordered life-style,⁵⁶ clearly indicates that the 'grandes choses' De Visé was expecting from the Guénégaud were machine plays. This expectation was shared by Chappuzeau who writes in his Le Théâtre français, also of 1674:

La Troupe du Roi, établie en son hôtel de la rue Mazarine, dite autrement des Fossés de Nesle, est à présent si bien assortie, si forte en nombre d'acteurs et d'actrices dont le mérite est connu, et si bien appuyée de l'affection des plus célèbres auteurs, qu'on ne peut attendre de son établissement qu'un magnifique succès. De plus, elle est en possession d'un très beau lieu, et d'un théâtre large et profond pour les plus grandes machines. (pp. 120-1)

The extraordinary similarity between these two accounts, together with the fact that both authors were paid sums of money by the Guénégaud

⁵⁶ Henry Prunières, 'L'Académie royale de musique et de danse', Revue musicale, 6 (1925), pp. 3-25 (p. 10).

company for unspecified services in 1673, lend weight to the theory that these items of publicity were either commissioned or at least paid for by the troupe.

Setting aside these eulogies, we have only one moderately detailed description of the Guénégaud's interior, dating from the period of its use as an opera house. This is to be found in the two volume Recueil factice faisant suite à la 'Muse historique' de Loret: lettres en vers à Monsieur (et divers), held in the Bibliothèque Mazarine. It has been published by Nutter and Thoinan, who attribute it to Robinet. In a letter dated 18 April 1671, the author records his impressions of a performance of Pomone:

Je l'ai vu cet opéra là,
Et je pensais n'avoir pas là
Suffisamment d'yeux et d'oreilles,
Pour toutes les rares merveilles
Que l'on peut ouïr et voir,
Et qu'à peine on peut concevoir.
A commencer donc par la salle
Où ce grand spectacle s'étale,
C'est un vaisseau large et profond,
Orné d'un superbe plafond,
Avec trois beaux rangs de loges,
Aussi lestes que pour des Doges.
Et qui plus est, de bout en bout,
Afin que nul n'y soit debout,
Un très commode amphithéâtre
D'où l'on peut tout voir au théâtre.⁵⁷

The superb ceiling Robinet describes was presumably the work of one of the three painters previously mentioned: Charles Hérault, Florentin Damoisellet and Guillaume de Sauzières.

Amphithéâtre

One of the most interesting features of Robinet's description of the interior of the Guénégaud theatre is his statement that all spectators were seated thanks to a spacious amphithéâtre or raked

⁵⁷ Nutter and Thoinan, Origines, p. 148.

seating area which filled the auditorium 'de bout en bout', leaving no room for the customary standing area or parterre directly in front of the stage. In this, the Guénégaud is highly reminiscent of the great theatre built for Richelieu by Jacques Lemercier in the Palais Cardinal, later known as the Palais-Royal. This theatre, as it existed before 1670, is described by Sauval:

La scène est élevée à un des bouts et le reste occupé par vingt-sept degrés de pierre qui montent mollement et insensiblement.... Sur chacun des degrés il <Lemercier> a fait construire une longue suite de formes de bois qui, ne couvrant que les deux tiers de la largeur des gradins, laisse une place aux spectateurs pour y mettre les pieds.⁵⁸

The Palais Cardinal was purpose-designed and built by Lemercier to provide Richelieu, a great promoter of spectacular productions, with a suitable theatre within his own palace, and its construction took three years.⁵⁹ The Guénégaud, on the other hand, was adapted from its original jeu de paume form in five months, and so would hardly have been as sophisticated either in design or in the materials used, with wood no doubt being used to create its extended amphithéâtre rather than stone.

Only one major, purpose-built theatre had been constructed in Paris between 1637 when the Grande Salle of the Palais Cardinal was begun, and 1671 when the Guénégaud opened. This was the ill-fated Salle des Machines designed by Carlo Vigarani, which opened in 1662 with the production of Ercole amante.⁶⁰ Here, too, the amphithéâtre was of major importance; indeed, almost the whole of the lower level of the

⁵⁸ Henri Sauval, Histoire et recherches des antiquités de la ville de Paris (Paris, 1724), 3 vols, II, 161; in Deierkauf-Holsboer, Mise en scène, pp. 29-30.

⁵⁹ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Mise en scène, p. 29.

⁶⁰ Rouchès, Inventaire, p. xvii.

auditorium was given over to it. Gabriel Rouchès describes the configuration of the Salle des Machines thus:

En allant de la scène vers le fond de la salle, on trouvait l'orchestre des musiciens, puis le parterre où se plaçaient les gardes du corps et où l'on accédait par deux portes latérales. La loge du Roi avançait en demi-cercle sur le parterre. Derrière, des gradins en ligne droite et parallèles à la scène pour des personnes de la cour; il y en avait d'autres sur les côtés. Au fond régnait une sorte d'hémicycle, destiné aux officiers de la maison du Roi et sur lequel s'ouvrait une sortie.⁶¹

The Salle des Machines, like the Palais Cardinal when originally constructed, was essentially a private theatre. Since the majority of the members of the audiences in these theatres would have been equals, it was possible to employ what Lawrenson calls 'a collective arrangement' employing an extended amphithéâtre,⁶² rather than emphasising the social stratification of the audience by the use of smaller, separate areas of seating. The Salle des Machines did, however, possess boxes as well as its amphithéâtre and parterre, and it is interesting to note that even given the private and aristocratic nature of its audience, social distinctions were still maintained by having the amphithéâtre itself divided up into different sections. A similar disposition could have been employed at the Guénégaud, thus giving rise to the use of the term amphithéâtre in the plural by Sourdéac and Champeron when describing the work carried out in order to turn the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille into an opera house.⁶³ The design of the Guénégaud amphithéâtre also appears to have owed something to the Palais-Royal in that the parterre was suppressed entirely, with no space being allocated to standing spectators.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. xix.

⁶² Lawrenson, French Stage, p. 230.

⁶³ Nutter and Thoinan, Origines, p. 144.

One reason for the designer's choosing to employ this seating arrangement for the Guénégaud auditorium may have been that, like the Palais Cardinal and the Salle des Machines, it was intended for the presentation of spectacular operatic productions involving the use of perspective scenery. This would have been seen to its best advantage from a position directly opposite the stage, hence the use of an extended amphithéâtre to supplement the side boxes imposed by a jeu de paume type configuration. The installation of this type of amphithéâtre at the Guénégaud also says a great deal about the type of customer Sourdéac and Champeron were hoping to attract to their new opera house. At the Hôtel de Bourgogne, the Marais and the Palais-Royal as adapted by Molière, theatres which all possessed a parterre, tickets for this area were cheaper than for any other part of the house.⁶⁴ This would have meant that access to the theatre was possible for the poorer sections of society as well as for the more affluent. The suppression of the parterre at the Guénégaud was a means of ensuring that such people were effectively banned from it. This could either have been in the hope of increasing the profitability of the enterprise, or in an attempt to establish the high social standing of the opera by ensuring that it performed only to bourgeois and aristocratic audiences, or else as a security measure, since the lackeys who formed part of this group were notorious troublemakers.⁶⁵ It would seem, however, that neither Molière's troupe nor the that of the Guénégaud, could afford to neglect this section of the audience, since one of the first things Molière did when he moved to the Palais-Royal in 1660, was to arrange for the

⁶⁴ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Mise en scène, pp. 130-2.

⁶⁵ This is underlined by the fact that in January 1674, at Lully's instigation, it was forbidden 'à tous gens de livrée, sous quelque prétexte que ce soit, de se présenter à la porte de l'Académie pour y entrer, même en payant, à peine de punition exemplaire' (Delamare, Traité, I, 475).

construction of a parterre, and the same work was carried out at the Guénégaud in 1673.

We have no details relating to the construction of the parterre at the Guénégaud, but we know that this work must have been carried out, since 375 tickets were sold for this area of the house at the very first performance by the combined troupes on 9 July 1673 (R I, 2). Given the similarities in design between the Palais-Royal and the Guénégaud, the process of adaptation of the two theatres was no doubt similar. At the Palais-Royal, a contract was drawn up between Du Croisy of Molière's troupe and a certain Paul Charpentier, detailing the work that was to be carried out. This specifies that, 'sera fait l'aire du parterre d'environ neuf toises sur quatre toises et demie de large ou environ, laquelle sera remplie de gravois blanc par le dessous et faire les murs pour soutenir ladite aire laquelle sera élevée en pente sur le derrière et bien enduite de bon plâtre comme il appartient'.⁶⁶ The parterre was situated in front of the remaining stone steps of Lemercier's amphithéâtre, and access to it was by means of a passage, for the document continues: 'Plus sera fait les cloisons et murs pour séparer le passage du parterre à conduire au bout d'icelui au pied des degrès, laquelle séparation sera faite de maçonnerie et charpenterie nécessaires' (p. 352). Six days later another contract, this time between Du Croisy and Denis Buret, provided for the construction of two false floors, one to raise the level of the stage, 'et l'autre plancher de quatre toises de profondeur et six toises de largeur pour servir de parterre, le tout rainuré et bouffeté' (p. 355).

⁶⁶ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 352. According to Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, this paragraph has been crossed out in the manuscript, with the marginal comment: 'Approuvé la rature de l'apostille ci-endroit comme inutile', followed by the initials of Philbert Gassot, known as Du Croisy.

The resultant configuration is described in a letter from Roger Herzel to Gaston Hall dated 31 March 1983:

... what made Molière's theatre different <from the Hôtel de Bourgogne> and more 'modern' and a better place for the spectator to see the play was the sloping floor: a parterre 'en pente' much smaller than at the H. de B., and between the back of the parterre and the loges du bout, an amphithéâtre at ground level - the remnants of Sauval's 27 stone steps. In a modern theatre these would be the best seats in the house - and at new plays the amphithéâtre was just as expensive as the loges and the seats on the stage.⁶⁷

As for the form of the parterre at the Guénégaud, we can only assume that since it possessed a similar amphithéâtre to the one at the Palais-Royal, the company would have employed a similar system when adapting it, particularly as those actors who had recently formed part of Molière's troupe were already acquainted with the advantages of a sloping parterre.

The arrangement of parterre and amphithéâtre was rather different at the rebuilt Marais theatre. Here, the amphithéâtre, while remaining at the rear of the parterre directly facing the stage, was raised above the level of the two rows of rear boxes, and was, in fact, constructed on top of them. This is made clear in the 'Mémoire de ce qu'il faut faire au Jeu de Paume du Marais', relating to work to be carried out after the fire of 1644:

Au-dessus du second rang de loges il faut de chacun côté une cloison de bois de sapin de douze pieds de haut et d'un pouce d'épais avec une porte à chacune....

⁶⁷ Quoted in H. Gaston Hall, Comedy in Context: Essays on Molière (Jackson, 1984), p. 53. At Molière's Palais-Royal and at the Guénégaud during the first seasons of its activity, tickets to the amphithéâtre cost 3 livres à l'ordre, that is for works performed in repertory, whereas tickets for the stage and for the first row of boxes cost 5 livres 10 sols. For the first performances of new works and important revivals, known as performances au double, the price of tickets to the amphithéâtre was raised to the same level as those for the stage and the first row of boxes, whereas the price of tickets to these two areas remained the same.

Entre les deux cloisons il faut un amphithéâtre de la même façon qu'il était soutenu par le devant d'un tirant qui doit traverser de la largeur du jeu de paume et chaque bout doit être enchassé dans la muraille. Ledit tirant doit avoir un pied d'épaisseur.

Ledit amphithéâtre doit avoir trois toises de haut et quatre de large ou environ plus ou moins bien 'bouctié' par dessous et garnis de degrés depuis le bas jusques en haut soutenu sur le même mur.⁶⁸

Until recently, it had been widely accepted that the Hôtel de Bourgogne, too, possessed this type of raised-level amphithéâtre,⁶⁹ especially as when this theatre was renovated in 1647 it was in direct imitation of the Marais.⁷⁰ One of the first people to disagree was Charles Niemeyer in his article 'The Hôtel de Bourgogne: France's first popular playhouse' which appeared in 1947. Basing his argument on a partial ground-plan of the Hôtel de Bourgogne produced by Dumont in 1773, Niemeyer argues that when the theatre was remodelled in 1647, the amphithéâtre was maintained in its original position, that is to say at ground level, and he produces his own hypothetical ground-plan of such a configuration. The evidence to support this view was slight, however, and Niemeyer's argument was largely swept aside, particularly by Deierkauf-Holsboer, who, in her study of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, states categorically that 'l'amphithéâtre qui commençait autrefois à la même hauteur que les loges de côté est construit en 1647 au-dessus du second rang de loges, face à la scène et s'étend sur toute la largeur du fond de la scène' (II, 57). Deierkauf-Holsboer bases this assertion on the 'Devis et marché de divers travaux à exécuter au théâtre de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne', in which it is stated that the Marais should be taken as a

⁶⁸ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, I, 196-7.

⁶⁹ In comparing the Palais-Royal to the Hôtel de Bourgogne in his letter to Gaston Hall, Roger Herzog, too, would seem to be following this line of thought (Hall, Comedy in Context, p. 53).

⁷⁰ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 185.

model, and that all work carried out at the Hôtel de Bourgogne should be 'à l'instar et conformément aux théâtre, loges, et galeries qui sont au jeu de paume du Marais où représentent des comédiens' (II, 185). But no mention is made here of the Marais amphithéâtre, and no details are given of the one to be installed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, beyond the cursory specification: 'Plus l'amphithéâtre sera fait le plus commodément que faire et pourra et selon que la place le permettra' (II, 184)

Several articles were subsequently published disputing Deierkauf-Holsboer's conclusions.⁷¹ These mainly concern themselves with the number of boxes positioned along either side of the parterre. Deierkauf-Holsboer held that there were six on either side with seven loges de fond, her critics that there were seven on either side with five loges de fond. This discussion, however, also called into question the size of the amphithéâtre, since, given the known dimensions of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, seven side boxes would have left a depth of only 2.59 m. (8.5 ft.) available for the amphithéâtre. It was this that caused Deirkauf-Holsboer to reject such a hypothesis in the first place, as André Villiers explains:

Or, conclut Mme Deierkauf-Holsboer, 'on n'a pu établir un amphithéâtre sur cette petite étendue'. Cette phrase, sans autre appui, qui n'est assortie d'aucun éclaircissement, commande seule le choix d'une largeur de 18.17 m. (même de 18.50 m.). Décision surprenante: pourquoi ne pourrait-on pas établir un amphithéâtre sur cette faible profondeur? Parce qu'il ne serait pas assez vaste et comporterait trop peu de rangs? Toute une tradition conteste cette interprétation.⁷²

⁷¹ Roy, 'Scène de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne'; Illingworth, 'Documents'; Villiers, 'Ouverture'; and Illingworth, 'Hôtel de Bourgogne'.

⁷² Villiers, 'Ouverture', p. 137.

Villiers, himself, states that such an amphithéâtre would have had room for four rows of benches and thus could have seated some eighty spectators.⁷³

These articles were followed in 1973 by W.L. Wiley's study 'The Hôtel de Bourgogne: another look at France's first public theatre', providing a much needed synthesis of all the available information and the various theories concerning the disposition of this playhouse. While agreeing with Roy as to the dimensions of the Hôtel de Bourgogne and the number of side boxes, Wiley disputes the u-shaped auditorium attributed to that theatre by Illingworth and shown on the Dumont plan of 1773, saying that this was a later modification.⁷⁴ What neither he, nor any other of Deierkauf-Holsboer's critics of that time thought to do, however, was to question her positioning of the amphithéâtre at the Hôtel de Bourgogne above the loges de fond in the manner of the Marais theatre.

This has been done more recently by Graham Barlow in his article 'The Hôtel de Bourgogne according to Sir James Thornhill'. Thornhill, an artist, draughtsman and man of the theatre, visited the Hôtel de Bourgogne, then housing the Comédie-Italienne, in March or April 1716 or 1717. He recorded his impressions of the theatre as rough sketches in his diary. These have since proved to be the earliest surviving graphic

⁷³ Such calculations are based on the fact that when new boxes were constructed for seventeenth-century theatres, as at the Marais in 1644 and at the Palais-Royal in 1660, they were generally 1 toise or 6 pieds wide (6.4 ft., 1.95 m.), (Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, I, 195; Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 351). As they were intended to seat eight people in two rows of four, it has been calculated that 1.5 pieds in width was allowed per person, and this figure has been applied to other seating areas whose dimensions are known in order to calculate their approximate capacity. In fact, Villiers's estimate of the capacity of the amphithéâtre at the Hôtel de Bourgogne would appear rather conservative, as we will see.

⁷⁴ Wiley, 'Hôtel de Bourgogne', pp. 70-6.

records of the Hôtel de Bourgogne. One of the sketches clearly shows the theatre's amphithéâtre, consisting of six rows of benches with boxes on three sides. The last three of these boxes on either side are angled in at 13° to join the three loges de fond, thus giving a rudimentary u-shaped configuration over fifty years before that recorded by Dumont (pp. 89-90). Basing his conclusions on this evidence, Barlow reiterates Niemeyer's theory as to the ground-level positioning of the amphithéâtre, stating that most theatre historians have been misled by following:

... not the mémoire for the Marais but Wilma Deierkauf-Holsboer's reconstruction of the Marais. In so doing they have assumed that the amphitheatre must have been above the rear boxes. But this treatment disregarded Niemeyer's suggestion which interprets the devis et marché, 'Plus il sera démolí le plancher bas le pignon de l'amphithéâtre et relevé la poutre et refait les loges pour poser les loges du bout et escalier pour monter aux galeries et paradis', according to the situation of the amphitheatre in the Hôtel de Bourgogne prior to 1647. Thornhill's sketch clearly vindicates Niemeyer's course of action. (p. 90)

If, therefore, like the Palais-Royal, the Hôtel de Bourgogne, too, had a raked ground-level amphithéâtre, (although the evidence is not conclusive), it is likely that the Guénégaud was similarly equipped, especially as it would have merely been a question of adapting the one already present, rather than of constructing one from scratch.

The largest number of tickets recorded as being sold for the Guénégaud amphithéâtre was 226 for a performance of Circé on 17 March 1675 (R II, 143). This figure would appear extremely high, especially when considered in relation to the capacities of the amphithéâtres in other Parisian theatres of the time. We have seen that in seventeenth-century theatre boxes 1.5 pieds (1.6 ft., 0.5 m.) in width was allowed per spectator. The amphithéâtre in the rebuilt Marais theatre was 4 toises wide (25.6 ft., 7.8 m.) and 3 toises or 18 pieds deep (19.2 ft.,

5.8 m.).⁷⁵ It could, therefore, have seated approximately sixteen people per row. The boxes at the Marais were 4 pieds deep and seated spectators in two rows each 2 pieds deep. The Marais amphithéâtre could, therefore, have accommodated nine such rows, giving an approximate total capacity of 144 spectators, rather higher than for the other Parisian theatres.

Applying the same method to other houses, in the Hôtel de Bourgogne as it is envisaged by D.H. Roy (with a raised level amphithéâtre), the amphithéâtre would have been 7 toises wide (44.8 ft., 13.65 m.),⁷⁶ and, according to André Villiers, could have contained four rows,⁷⁷ giving a total capacity of 112 spectators.⁷⁸ If, on the other hand, we accept Barlow's view of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, the number of spectators who could be seated in the amphithéâtre is more difficult to calculate, since the angling in of the last three side boxes on either side means that the benches in the amphithéâtre were of unequal length. Nevertheless, bearing in mind that these boxes were each 1 toise (6.4 ft., 1.95 m.) in width, and subtracting 2 toises (12.8 ft., 3.9 m.) from the 7 toises (44.8 ft., 13.65 m.) overall width of the theatre to allow for the 4 pieds (4.3 ft., 1.3 m.) depth of the boxes on either side and the passages behind which gave access to them, it is possible to estimate the length of each of the six benches shown on the Thornhill sketch. Using this method, a total capacity of 96 was arrived at, rather more than the 80 Barlow himself projects (p. 90).

⁷⁵ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, I, 197.

⁷⁶ Roy, 'Scène de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne', p. 230.

⁷⁷ Villiers, 'Ouverture', p. 137.

⁷⁸ Curiously, although Villiers accepts Roy's theory as to the 2.59 m. (8.5 ft.) depth of the Hôtel de Bourgogne amphithéâtre, he reduces the width to 9.75 m. (32 ft.), thus reducing his estimation of its capacity to approximately 80 spectators.

Henri Lagrave, discussing the disposition and capacity of the Hôtel de Bourgogne in the eighteenth century, describes the amphithéâtre as being 1 toise 4 pieds in depth (10.7 ft., 3.25 m.) by 3 toises 2 pieds 5 pouces (approximately 21.3 ft., 6.5 m.), and adds that in 1781, the Italian company themselves assessed its capacity as being 84 spectators, though by this time the front of the amphithéâtre had been curved which may have reduced its size.⁷⁹

Where Molière's Palais-Royal theatre is concerned, it is possible to determine the dimensions of the amphithéâtre with some exactitude. The marché between Du Croisy and Paul Charpentier provides for the construction of two rows of boxes, one above the other, with seventeen boxes in each row. These boxes were each to be the standard 1 toise (6.4 ft., 1.95 m.) in width, just as at the Marais theatre.⁸⁰ From the subsequent marché between Du Croisy and Denis Buret, we know the stage to have been 30 pieds (32 ft., 9.75 m.) in width.⁸¹ If we follow Roger Herzel and assume that the horse-shoe shaped configuration of boxes shown in the plans of the Palais-Royal published by Lagrave in Le Théâtre et le public and those published by Agne Beijer in Le Lieu théâtral à la Renaissance,⁸² dates from the renovation of the auditorium by Lully and Vigarani in 1674, it would seem likely that the boxes formed the standard rectangle: each tier of 17 had a row of six on each side, and a row of five facing the stage; the five toises at one end of the rectangle thus corresponds to the 30 pieds of the proscenium opening

⁷⁹ Henri Lagrave, Le Théâtre et le public à Paris de 1715 à 1750 (Paris, 1972), pp. 88-90.

⁸⁰ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 351.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 355.

⁸² Lagrave, Théâtre et public, Figs. 7-12; Agne Beijer, 'Le Ballet de la prospérité et des armes de la France', in Le Lieu théâtral à la Renaissance, edited by Jean Jacquot (Paris, 1964), pp. 377-404.

at the other end'.⁸³ Thus, bearing in mind the width of the boxes, the area occupied by the parterre and the amphithéâtre together would have measured 5 toises (32 ft., 9.75 m.) in width by 6 toises in length (38.4 ft., 11.7 m.). A certain degree of doubt, however, is thrown on this conclusion by the fact that in the marché between Du Croisy and Buret, it is stipulated that the projected parterre should measure '6 toises de largeur'.⁸⁴ One can only suppose that it was intended to project 3 pieds on either side, beneath the over-hanging first row of boxes. The marché between Du Croisy and Buret also informs us that the planned parterre was to measure 4 toises (25.6 ft., 7.8 m.) in depth.⁸⁵ Subtracting this from the total space available leaves an amphithéâtre measuring 5 toises (32 ft., 9.75 m.) in width by 2 toises (12.8 ft., 3.9 m.) in depth. This could have accommodated six benches each seating twenty spectators, thus giving a capacity of 120. The only detailed information we have relating to audiences at Molière's theatre is contained in the 'Registre d'Hubert' covering the season 1672-3. Here we find that our projected capacity figure for the Palais-Royal amphithéâtre of 120 spectators was exceeded on only one occasion during that time, and then by only a small margin, when, on 11 November 1673, 124 people squeezed in for a performance of Psyché.⁸⁶

When the Palais-Royal was adapted by Vigarani for Lully in 1674, a horse-shoe shaped arrangement of boxes was introduced, thereby changing the shape of the amphithéâtre. According to Lagrave, it now measured 2

⁸³ Hall, Comedy in Context, p. 53.

⁸⁴ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 355.

⁸⁵ Ibid. The measurements given in the earlier marché between Du Croisy and Charpentier of nine toises by four and a half toises (57.5 x 28.8 ft., 17.5 x 8.8 m.) would seem to have been erroneous, especially as the clause in which they are contained has been crossed from the document.

⁸⁶ 'Registre d'Hubert', p. 79.

toises 3 pieds 1 pouce (approximately 16 ft., 4.9 m.) in depth, 3 toises 3 pieds 5 pouces (approximately 23 ft., 7 m.) at its widest point, and 1 toise 7 pouces at its narrowest point (approximately 6.9 ft., 2.1 m.). However, since apparently nine benches were squeezed in instead of six, the capacity remained unchanged at 120 spectators.⁸⁷

Passing over the Guénégaud, and the previously mentioned adaptation of the Palais-Royal by Lully and Vigarani, the next major theatre to be constructed in Paris was the new Comédie-Française designed by D'Orbay, which opened in 1689.⁸⁸ Here, too, a horse-shoe shaped configuration of boxes was employed, with the amphithéâtre fitting into the curved area between them. According to Roubo, the amphithéâtre was raised 6 feet above the level of the parterre and was 15 pieds (16 ft., 4.9 m.) deep, and 34 pieds (36.2 ft., 11 m.) wide at its broadest point. It was raked at an angle of 1 pouce per pied, and consisted of seven parallel benches and an eighth which followed the curve of the rear boxes. Roubo, himself, calculates that this amphithéâtre could have seated some ninety spectators,⁸⁹ Lagrave gives a more probable, higher figure of 120 to 130 spectators, partly explaining this discrepancy by pointing out that the central seats in each row, drawn in with dotted lines on the Blondel plan of the auditorium, could be lifted out to facilitate access, rather like the modern strapontin.⁹⁰

Looking at these estimates of the capacities of amphithéâtres in various seventeenth-century Parisian theatres, the disparity between

⁸⁷ Lagrave, Théâtre et public, p. 83.

⁸⁸ See Nicole Bourdel, 'L'Etablissement et la construction de l'Hôtel des Comédiens Français rue des Fossés-Saint-Germain-des-Prés (Ancienne Comédie) 1687-1690', Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre, 7 (1955), pp. 145-72.

⁸⁹ André-Jacob Roubo fils, Traité de la construction des théâtres et des machines théâtrales (Paris, 1777), p. 28.

⁹⁰ Lagrave, Théâtre et public, p. 81.

them and the 226 highest capacity figure recorded for the Guénégaud appears considerable. This is all the more striking when we consider that the width of the Guénégaud stage, and probably, therefore, of the auditorium, was exactly the same as that of the Palais-Royal: 30 pieds (32 ft., 9.8 m.).⁹¹ The 226 capacity figure for the Guénégaud amphithéâtre was not, however, an isolated exception; for at all of the first nine performances of the run of Circé which closed the 1674-5 season, attendances in the amphithéâtre were surprisingly high: 226 on 17 March, 202 on 19 March, 188 on 22 March, 212 on 24 March, 209 on 26 March, 192 on 29 March, 222 on 2 April and 190 on 5 April (R II, 139-47). De Visé in Le Mercure galant made certain claims concerning the audiences at the first few performances of Circé:

Il est à remarquer que pendant les six premières semaines, la salle de comédie se trouva toute remplie dès midi; et que comme l'on n'y pouvait trouver de place on donnait un louis d'or à la porte, seulement pour y avoir entrée, et que l'on était content quand pour la même somme que l'on donnait aux premières loges, on était placé au troisième rang. Je n'avance rien dont les Registres des comédiens ne fassent foi.⁹²

It should be born in mind that De Visé was writing this almost thirty-five years after the event, and in the Registres no immediately obvious incongruities appear in the records of ticket sales for the area of the house he mentions.⁹³ The largest number of tickets sold for the third

⁹¹ Nutter and Thoinan, Origines, pp. 147-8.

⁹² Mercure galant (January 1710), p. 286.

⁹³ In the Registres, attendances and takings are recorded under five headings relating to the different areas of the house: the stage, the three rows of boxes, the amphithéâtre and the parterre. Seats in boxes could either be taken individually or else a whole box hired as a single unit. At the first performances of new works, certain seat prices were raised. Thus, at the time of the production of Circé, it would have been necessary, for a new play, to pay 5 livres 10 sols for access to the stage, stage boxes, first row of boxes and amphithéâtre.

row of boxes was 105 on 2 April, and for the second row, seventy on 5 April, neither of which is unusually high. No tickets are recorded as having been sold for the stage, but this was normal for machine plays during the early years of the Guénégaud's activity. Under the heading premières loges, however, were entered solely those boxes hired as single units. Thus, the only heading under which tickets costing 5 livres 10 sols could be entered individually was 'Amphithéâtre'. If, therefore, as De Visé maintains, some people paid a louis d'or, or twice this sum, merely to gain access to the theatre, and others paid 5 livres 10 sols to be seated in the third row of boxes, where tickets for new plays normally only cost 2 livres; since no other category shows an undue fluctuation, it would seem that the revenue obtained by these practices was entered under the heading amphithéâtre, together with that obtained by the legitimate sale of tickets for this area.

If, therefore, when calculating the capacity of the Guénégaud amphithéâtre, we disallow the figures from the first few performances of Circé, the next highest figure we find is 125 at a performance of L'Inconnu on 3 January 1676 (R III, 112). The closeness of this figure to the 124 known maximum at the Palais-Royal, especially given the similarity in the design of the amphithéâtres in the two theatres, would suggest that the capacity of the Guénégaud amphithéâtre was also approximately 120 spectators, and that there, too, they were seated on at least six rows of benches measuring 30 pieds (32 ft., 9.75 m.) at their widest point. That the Guénégaud was equipped with such benches is known from the fact that on 28 September 1677, 6 livres were paid 'pour avoir raccommode les bancs de l'amphithéâtre' (R V, 52), and on 18 November 1678, 1 livres 10 sols to the menuisier, Laurens for the same job (R VI, 110).

Despite Herzel's claims as to its excellent position, the amphithéâtre was not as popular as he suggests, at either the Palais-Royal or the Guénégaud. For example, at the latter theatre in 1674-5, during which season the first nine performances of Circé were given with outstanding success, 3,220 tickets were sold for the amphithéâtre, giving an average of just over 22 tickets per performance. 1,863 of these tickets were, however, sold for the first nine performances of Circé, and if we discount them, the average attendance in the amphithéâtre drops to under ten spectators per performance. Indeed, in later seasons, the heading 'Amphithéâtre' was frequently left blank, or else bracketed together with 'Premières Loges' and sometimes also 'Théâtre'. The frequency with which this occurred is shown in the following chart:

AMPHITHEATRE HEADING LEFT BLANK OR BRACKETED

SEASON	TOTAL PERFS	A BLANK	%	A BRACKET	%	TOTAL	%
1673-4	108	6	5.5	0	0	6	5.5
1674-5	145	7	4.8	1	0.7	8	5.5
1675-6	146	8	5.5	12	8.2	20	13.7
1676-7	131	35	26.7	15	11.4	50	38.2
1677-8	144	67	46.5	15	10.4	72	50.0
1678-9	163	147	90.2	1	0.6	148	90.8
1679-80	179	168	93.8	2	1.1	170	95.0
1680-1	77	75	97.4	0	0	75	97.4

On many occasions the heading was crossed out altogether and the space used to enter either individual box sales or else sums owed to the company by members of the nobility.

During the course of the 1676-7 season, the Guénégaud company reduced the cost of most tickets to the stage and first row of boxes to 3 livres for performances à l'ordre, the same as for the amphithéâtre. Tickets for all three areas rose to 5 livres 10 sols au double. Apparently, once this had been done, there was little incentive for the

public to occupy the amphithéâtre. This has led H.C. Lancaster to suggest that as it gradually fell into disuse, the amphithéâtre began to be used to accommodate foreign visitors admitted to the theatre free of charge, citing Siamese, Algerian and Turkish delegations as examples.⁹⁴ We can, however, find no record of such attendances at the Guénégaud prior to the foundation of the Comédie-Française.

Parterre

We have seen that one of the first things Molière and his troupe did upon removing to the Palais-Royal was to arrange for the construction of a parterre 6 toises (38.4 ft., 11.7 m.) wide and 4 toises (25.6 ft., 7.8 m.) deep,⁹⁵ and that the Guénégaud troupe followed suit. The size of the Palais-Royal parterre would appear to have been smaller than that of the Marais. This last was estimated by Deierkauf-Holsboer to have measured 11.7 x 19.8 m. (38.4 x 65 ft.).⁹⁶ One of the implications of John Golder's re-evaluation of the 'Mémoire de ce qu'il faut faire au Jeu de Paume des Marais' is, however, to alter the dimensions of the parterre. Whereas Deierkauf-Holsboer interprets the evidence to suggest that the theatre was equipped with two tiers of nine boxes along either side of the auditorium, with a single row of four boxes facing the stage,⁹⁷ Golder convincingly puts forward the argument that there were two tiers of eighteen boxes running all the way around the auditorium: seven along either side and four facing the stage on each row.⁹⁸ This reduces the size of the parterre to 4 toises by 7

⁹⁴ Lancaster, History, IV, 43.

⁹⁵ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, pp. 352-5.

⁹⁶ Marais, I, 112.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 110-11.

⁹⁸ 'Théâtre du Marais', p. 136.

toises (25.6 x 44.8 ft., 7.8 x 13.6 m.), considerably smaller than Deierkauf-Holsboer's estimate, but still larger than the parterre at the Palais-Royal. This difference is understandable when we consider that the Marais had a raised-level amphithéâtre, thereby leaving more of the lower level available for the parterre.

Similarly, the size we assign to the Hôtel de Bourgogne parterre depends on whether we believe it to have possessed a ground-level or a raised amphithéâtre. Wiley gives dimensions of 59 by 42 feet (18 x 12.8 m.) for a parterre with a raised-level amphithéâtre.⁹⁹ Unfortunately, Barlow, in his study of Thornhill's sketches, makes no attempt to deduce the size of the parterre from them. Lagrave, on the other hand, discussing the disposition of the Hôtel de Bourgogne in the eighteenth century, states that at this time, with a ground-level amphithéâtre, the parterre measured 6 toises 3 pieds (22.4 ft., 12.7 m.) in width by 5 toises 1 pied (33 ft., 10.1 m.) in depth.¹⁰⁰

The parterre is generally considered to have been purely a standing area, but, at the Marais, seats were provided in the parterre for a limited number of spectators. These took the form of two benches, one on either side of the auditorium, running lengthways below the first row of boxes. According to Deierkauf-Holsboer, these would have enabled approximately eighty spectators to be seated at any one time during the course of a performance.¹⁰¹ Golder's reduction of the depth of the parterre to 7 toises reduces this number accordingly to 56.¹⁰² Similar benches were installed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1647 in imitation of

⁹⁹ Wiley, 'Hôtel de Bourgogne', p. 57.

¹⁰⁰ Théâtre et public, p. 83.

¹⁰¹ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, I, 112.

¹⁰² 'Théâtre du Marais', p. 137.

the Marais,¹⁰³ and here also they could have seated some fifty-six spectators.¹⁰⁴ The Guénégaud, too, was equipped with benches in its parterre, although we do not know where they were situated nor how many people they would have seated. Evidence of their existence is provided by the payment on 12 July 1675 of 4 livres 10 sols to the stagehand Dubreuil 'pour les bancs du parterre', presumably for having carried out repairs (R III, 35). These benches may have been positioned along the sides of the auditorium as at the Marais and the Hôtel de Bourgogne; there is, however, a second possibility. At D'Orbay's new Comédie-Française, which opened in 1689, a section of the parterre was specifically designated as a seating area. This was known as the parquet, and Roubo describes it thus: 'Le Parquet était une enceinte formée à l'extrémité du parterre entre ce dernier et l'orchestre, et dans laquelle était placés trois rangs de banquettes parallèles au théâtre, et deux petites en retour perpendiculairement à ces dernières'.¹⁰⁵ The orchestre, itself, where the musicians were seated, was separated from the parquet by a partition, and consisted of a single bench running the width of the stage. According to Roubo, this one bench was sufficient given that the number of musicians a theatrical company could employ had been restricted by the various edicts issued in Lully's favour.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 185.

¹⁰⁴ At the Hôtel de Bourgogne there were seven boxes in each of the side rows (Roy, 'Scène de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne', p. 231). These each measured one toise in width, giving a total length for each bench of fourteen toises. Such benches are not mentioned by Barlow, and may well have been suppressed by the time of Thornhill's visit to the Hôtel de Bourgogne.

¹⁰⁵ Traité, p. 28.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

Chappuzeau, in Le Théâtre français of 1674, describes the various places where the musicians had been seated prior to this date: 'Ci-devant on les plaçait, ou derrière le théâtre, ou sur les ailes, ou dans un retranchement entre le théâtre et le parterre, comme en une forme de parquet. Depuis peu on les met dans une des loges de fond, d'où ils font plus de bruit que de tout autre lieu où on les pourrait placer' (pp. 146-7). Singers, too, were positioned in boxes, as is indicated by La Grange's entry in his Registre at the time of the production of Psyché in 1671: 'Jusques ici les musiciens et musiciennes n'avaient point voulu paraître en public. Ils chantaient à la comédie dans des loges grillées et treillissées, mais on surmonta cet obstacle, et avec quelque légère dépense, on trouva des personnes qui chantèrent sur le théâtre à visage découvert habillés comme les comédiens' (I, 125-6). These boxes could have been either loges d'avant-scène or loges de fond, as Christian Delmas points out when making a case for the existence of the former at the Palais-Royal prior to their usual supposed date of introduction.¹⁰⁷

Chappuzeau's description is interesting in that it points to the existence of the parquet in the French theatre prior to that at the new Comédie-Française. We know that Molière's Palais-Royal theatre was, in January 1673, equipped with an orchestre positioned between the parterre and the stage, for, during the course of a violent disturbance disrupting a performance of Psyché, certain 'gens d'épée ... auraient troublé lesdits chanteurs par des hurlements, chansons dérisionnaires et frappaements de pieds dans ledit parterre et contre les ais de l'enclos où sont les joueurs d'instruments'.¹⁰⁸ Later that year, the musicians were banished from this position by the terms of the ordonnance issued

¹⁰⁷ Christian Delmas, 'Des loges d'avant-scène au Palais-Royal au temps de Molière?', Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre, 37 (1985), pp. 125-30 (p. 127).

¹⁰⁸ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 543.

in Lully's favour on 30 April, which reduced the number of instrumentalists they were allowed to use from twelve to six, and the number of singers from six to two, and which, in addition, forbade 'à toutes les troupes de comédiens français et étrangers établies ou qui s'établiront ci-après dans sa bonne ville de Paris ... d'avoir aucun orchestre'.¹⁰⁹ This area, having been abandoned by the musicians, may well have been taken over by members of the audience.

On 14 July 1673, the day after the Guénégaud theatre opened, 18 livres 10 sols were paid 'aux charpentiers qui ont travaillé deux jours à l'orchestre' (R I, 3). How we interpret this depends on what we understand by the term 'orchestre'. If we take it to mean the area in front of the stage hitherto occupied by the musicians, we could see this as a payment either for its adaptation as a seating area, or else for the construction of a parterre; although if the latter, it is strange that the parterre is not referred to by name. If, however, the term 'orchestre' refers to the area of the house to which the musicians had recently been banished, the payment would have been for the transformation of one of the rear boxes for their use.¹¹⁰ That the

¹⁰⁹ Delamare, Traité, I, 474. In 1716, the musicians were again driven from their position in front of the stage to the rear boxes when the Opera, once more jealous of its privilège, obtained the following injunction:

... faire défense auxdits Comédiens français d'avoir un orchestre dans leur salle; ordonner qu'ils feront détruire celui qui y est, sauf à eux de placer leurs violons ou instruments, qui ne pourront excéder le nombre de six dans les troisièmes loges du fond de ladite salle, où ils étaient ci-devant.

(Lawrenson, French Stage, p. 253)

¹¹⁰ Thomas Corneille in his Dictionnaire des termes des arts et des sciences defines 'orchestre' as a 'lieu où l'on place la symphonie dans les salles destinées aux représentations des poèmes dramatiques et des spectacles, et qui sépare le théâtre du parterre'. (2 vols (Paris, 1694 and 1695, reprinted Geneva, 1968), I, 134). This work appeared five years after the opening of the new Comédie-Française.

Guénégaud possessed an orchestre in its opera-house form is not in doubt, since this is one of the theatre's assets recorded as having been sold to those remaining of Molière's troupe by Sourdéac and Champeron.¹¹¹

According to Jules Bonnassies, the musicians only occupied this position in the rear boxes until the third season of the Guénégaud's existence: 'Les violons n'en descendirent que pour les représentations de l'Inconnu, en 1675; ils occupèrent alors celle qu'ils ont conservée depuis, et que nous leur voyons marquée, dès 1688, sur les plans du nouveau théâtre construit rue des Fossés-Saint-Germain-des-Prés'.¹¹² Unfortunately, Bonnassies does not give the source of his date for the musicians removal. If we accept it, we have to conclude that, at least in the second half of its career, the Guénégaud did possess an orchestre directly in front of the stage. Since the theatre's account books contain no record of any work being carried out in this area at this time, we can only assume that the musicians retook possession of the area from which they had earlier been evicted, or else that it was adapted so as to seat both musicians and members of the audience. If so, the Guénégaud would have been the forerunner of the purpose-designed and built Comédie-Française of 1689, where the primitive form of the Guénégaud orchestre was elaborated and expanded so as to give a wholly separate, adjacent orchestre and parquet.

Some idea of the possible dimensions of such an orchestre are provided by the plans of the Palais-Royal theatre preserved in the Archives Nationales and published by Lagrave. There the orchestre was 3 toises 5 pieds 6 pouces wide (25 ft., 7.64 m.) by 1 toise 3 pieds 4

¹¹¹ Bonnassies, Histoire administrative, p. 27.

¹¹² Bonnassies, Musique, p. 2.

pouces deep (9.9 ft., 3.03 m.).¹¹³ The orchestre at the Palais-Royal differed from that at the Comédie-Française as described by Roubo, in that it did not span the entire width of the stage - 4 toises 4 pieds 11 pouces (30.8 ft., 9.4 m.) - and in that it was considerably deeper than the single bench present at the latter theatre.¹¹⁴ But it should be remembered that the Palais-Royal was adapted by Vigarani so as to be suitable for opera, and that its company was not subject to the same restrictions on the number of musicians they could employ as the other theatrical troupes.

Another potential but inconclusive piece of evidence is the engraving supposedly representing a scene from Cinna being performed in the Guénégaud theatre. Cinna, as we have seen, was first given at the Guénégaud on 1 October 1679, almost four years after the time when, according to Bonnassies, the musicians had taken up position in front of the stage, and yet the engraving does not show them. What we do see is a partition running the entire width of the stage, with the audience's heads alone visible behind it. It is, however, due to a foreshortening of the perspective, impossible to tell whether this audience is seated or standing. The engraving could, therefore, be taken as evidence of the existence of a parquet in the Guénégaud theatre if we assume the spectators behind the partition to be seated, or if we believe them to be standing in the parterre, they could be shielding from view the musicians seated in front of them.

Evidence is provided, too, by the Thornhill sketches of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, for they show that this theatre was equipped with both a parquet and an orchestre in 1717, considerably earlier than is usually

¹¹³ Lagrave, Théâtre et public, p. 83.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

supposed; and Barlow conjectures that they may have been in existence even earlier:

It will be noted ... that Thornhill has indicated boxes, orchestra and parquet, parterre and amphithéâtre. Three of these were discussed in 1647 but the orchestra and the parquet received no mention. The first record of a parquet came in 1760..., when it was said to be an innovation. Clearly there was an orchestra and parquet in 1717, antedating the earliest report by forty-three years.¹¹⁵

Barlow goes on to suggest that further research might bring to light whether or not a parquet existed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1647. This would seem highly unlikely, given that there is no mention of such an area in either the 'Devis et marché' of work to be carried out at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, nor in the 'Mémoire' relating to the reconstruction of the Marais theatre in imitation of which the Hôtel de Bourgogne was renovated. It is possible, however, that a parquet and an orchestre were in existence at the Hôtel de Bourgogne prior to the expulsion of the Italian troupe in 1697, especially as, when they were re-admitted and the Hôtel de Bourgogne re-opened in 1716, it was reported that no major structural alterations had been effected.¹¹⁶ In which case, the reason for the parquet being described as a novelty in 1760 is probably that the Italians were ordered to destroy their orchestre shortly after they re-opened in the same way as the French actors had been in 1716, and that this also involved the destruction of the parquet. Another argument in favour of the Hôtel de Bourgogne's possessing an orchestre and a parquet prior to its closure in 1694, is that the Guénégaud theatre was apparently equipped with an orchestre from 1675 onwards, and the Comédie-Française with both orchestre and parquet from 1689 onwards.

¹¹⁵ Barlow, 'Hôtel de Bourgogne', p. 89.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 88.

If the Guénégaud possessed a parquet as well as an orchestre, it is curious that it is never specifically mentioned in the company Registres, especially if members of the paying public were admitted to it, since it is unlikely that the tarif there was the same as for the parterre. Given the lack of evidence, it would seem best to leave the question open.

As for the capacity of the Guénégaud parterre, the greatest number of spectators it held at any one time was 607 at a performance of La Devineresse on Sunday 31 December 1679 (R VII, 131). This can be compared with a highest figure at the Palais-Royal of 514 for Psyché on 20 November 1672, the only year for which we have figures.¹¹⁷ This does not necessarily mean, however, that the Guénégaud parterre was bigger than the one at the Palais-Royal. Indeed, since the widths of the stages in the two theatres were identical, their parterres were probably of comparable size, that is to say, between 38.4 and 32 feet wide (11.7 m. and 9.75 m.) and 25.6 feet deep (7.8 m.). The Guénégaud parterre would appear, therefore, to have had a approximate capacity of six hundred spectators, identical to that of the Hôtel de Bourgogne in the eighteenth century.¹¹⁸

Boxes

We now come to the most difficult areas in my attempted reconstruction of the Guénégaud's physical disposition - the arrangement of boxes in the auditorium. From the headings under which ticket sales are entered in the company's account books ('Premières Loges', 'Loges Hautes' or 'Deuxièmes Loges' and 'Troisièmes Loges'), we see that the Guénégaud possessed the three rows of boxes surrounding the auditorium

¹¹⁷ 'Registre d'Hubert', p. 83.

¹¹⁸ Lagrave, Théâtre et public, p. 89.

usual in a seventeenth-century theatre. The lower of these rows would, no doubt, have been raised some six feet above the level of the parterre, its floor being at approximately the same height as that of the stage. This was certainly the case at the Marais theatre, where the first row of side boxes was raised 7 pieds (7.5 ft., 2.3 m.) at the end nearest the stage, sloping almost imperceptibly to 8 pieds (8.5 ft., 2.6 m.) at the end nearest the amphithéâtre.¹¹⁹ The boxes were also raised above ground-level at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, where, in 1647 it was specified that seating should be positioned along the edges of the parterre beneath them.¹²⁰

Sometimes a box would be taken as a unit, but more often tickets would be sold for seats in the boxes individually. In fact, the third row of boxes, though described as such in the Registres, was probably not divided into compartments at all, but consisted of a kind of balcony running around the auditorium above the first and second rows. This was the case at the Marais from 1644 onwards,¹²¹ and at the Palais-Royal after its conversion by Carlo Vigarani for Lully, for De Visé writes in the Mercure galant that the troisièmes loges there, 'forment une espèce de galerie où chacun prend telle place qu'il veut, avec entière liberté de s'y promener'.¹²² That this was also so at the Guénégaud would seem to be indicated by the fact that at no time was a box taken as a unit in this area of the house.

There was no financial disadvantage to hiring a whole box, at least during the first seasons of the Guénégaud's activity, since the

¹¹⁹ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, I, 195.

¹²⁰ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 184.

¹²¹ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, I, 112.

¹²² Mercure galant (March 1678), quoted in Pierre Mélèse, Le Théâtre et le public à Paris sous Louis XIV (Paris, 1934), p. 42.

cost was the same as for the total number of seats it contained. Thus, a box in the second row seating eight people cost 12 livres à l'ordre (the equivalent of eight tickets at 1 livre 10 sols each, the normal price in this area), and 24 livres au double (eight times 3 livres, the raised price).

During these first seasons, the price of a ticket in the first row of boxes and for seats on the stage was 5 livres 10 sols both à l'ordre and au double. From this we can determine that not all boxes at the Guénégaud seated eight people, since we find throughout the Registres references to boxes being taken at 22 livres, 33 livres and 66 livres, as well as at the more normal 44 livres (8 x 5 livres 10 sols).¹²³ From late 1676 onwards, as we have seen, the price of tickets for the premières loges and for the stage was reduced for performances à l'ordre to 3 livres, the same as for the amphithéâtre. The first time this occurred was on 6 September 1676 for the premières loges, and on 6 October 1676 for the stage (R IV, 58, 70).¹²⁴ Nevertheless, for performances au double, ticket prices in these two areas were raised to their former level of 5 livres 10 sols, and when boxes were hired as units their prices continued to be multiples of this sum.

The vast majority of these references to the hiring of boxes as multiples of 5 livres 10 sols occurs under the heading of 'Premières Loges' - the first or lower row of boxes. Using the 5 livres 10 sols first-row boxes seat price as a guide, therefore, we can estimate that

¹²³ Boxes were also occasionally taken at other prices, not multiples of the usual cost of a ticket in a given area; but this occurred very infrequently, and can usually be explained by some deviation in either payment for or occupation of the box.

¹²⁴ At the latter performance the théâtre heading was bracketed together with those for the premières loges and amphithéâtre and a single figure relating to the sale of tickets at 3 livres was entered. The first time tickets are explicitly recorded as having been sold at 3 livres for the stage was one month later on 6 November 1676 (R IV, 83).

the Guénégaud possessed boxes seating four, six, and twelve, as well as eight people. In this, the Guénégaud differs from what we know of earlier seventeenth-century theatres. According to the 'Mémoire' of work to be carried out at the Marais in 1644, all the theatre's 36 boxes were to be the same size, the only difference being that the loges de fond were each to contain three seats instead of the usual two benches each seating four people.¹²⁵ The 'Devis et marché' for modifications to the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1647 calls for the construction of 'deux rangs de loges de dix-neuf à chacun rang, d'une toise de milieu de large et de la profondeur qui sera nécessaire'.¹²⁶ Similarly, at the Palais-Royal, Du Croisy's contract with Paul Charpentier of November 1660 was for the construction of two rows of seventeen boxes each 6 pieds (6.4 ft., 1.95 m.) wide.¹²⁷

These were all theatres where at least originally a standard, rectangular, jeu de paume type formation had been employed. However, when those that survived were adapted to a horseshoe-shaped configuration later in the century, this affected the capacity of the boxes in various areas of the house. Thus, although Barlow uses the 'Devis et marché' as the basis of his calculations when attempting to reconstruct the interior of the Hôtel de Bourgogne from the Thornhill sketch, the effect of angling the boxes in around the ground-level amphithéâtre is to slightly increase the size of the sixth box on each side (the first one to be angled in), and greatly increase that of the last two side boxes and the outer two of the three loges de fond.¹²⁸ Similarly, when Vigarani adapted the Palais-Royal for Lully in 1673, the

¹²⁵ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, I, 185.

¹²⁶ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 183.

¹²⁷ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 351.

¹²⁸ Barlow, 'Hôtel de Bourgogne', Fig. 2.

resultant horseshoe-shaped auditorium had on its lower-level nine boxes seating eight people along the sides of the auditorium; four boxes seating twelve people (one adjacent to the stage-left balcony, and three facing the stage, all the same width as the side boxes but deeper, accommodating three rows of spectators); two clavicules seating four people at the rear of each side row, leaving space for passages giving access to the amphithéâtre; and two balconies each seating approximately eighteen people.¹²⁹

Whether the Guénégaud itself possessed a rectangular or horseshoe-shaped auditorium it is impossible to say categorically. It does, however, appear to have occupied a place in a developing trend to provide audiences with a choice of boxes in varying sizes, and this would seem to indicate that at least a rudimentary rounding of the auditorium was employed, with the side boxes probably being angled in around the ground-level amphithéâtre as at the Hôtel de Bourgogne as sketched by Thornhill. This trend towards a horseshoe-shaped auditorium with smaller, more numerous boxes continued throughout the following century, and theatres were adapted to fit it, so that in 1781, according to the Italian actors who performed there, the Hôtel de Bourgogne possessed:

Parquet	180 places
Parterre	600 -
Loges grillées	
2 sur la scène, à 6 places	12 -
8 sur le parterre, à 4 places	32 -
1 ^{er} rang	
2 baignoires à 4 places	8 -
2 loges d'avant-scène à 6 places	12 -
2 balcons à 21 places	42 -
14 loges de côté à 8 places	112 -
2 clavicules à 4 places	8 -

¹²⁹ These figures are calculated from the plans of the Palais-Royal preserved in the Archives Nationales and published by Lagrave (Théâtre et public, Fig. 8), the originals of which he believes to antedate the Blondel plan of 1754 (Ibid., p. 84).

4 loges de face à 6 places	24	-
2 loges de face à 3 places	6	-
2 ^e rang		
2 baignoires à 4 places	8	-
2 loges d'avant-scène à 6 places	12	-
2 balcons à 12 places	24	-
14 loges de côté à 8 places	112	-
3 loges de face à 12 places	36	-
2 clavicules à 4 places	8	-
3 ^e rang comme au 2 ^e	200	-
2 baignoires derrière les 3 ^{es} loges, à 4 places	8	-
	130	

Having established that the Guénégaud possessed boxes seating four, six, eight, and twelve people, we next have to determine how many there were of each type and where in the theatre they were situated. Again the Registres provide us with vital information. The greatest numbers of boxes taken of each type were as follows: three at 66 livres on 22 and 29 March 1675 (R II, 144), thirteen at 44 livres on 24 and 29 March 1680, five at 33 livres on 22 March 1680 (R VII, 173, 170), and seven at 22 livres on 24 March and 2 April 1675 (R II, 142, 146). This, then, gives an approximate idea of the number of boxes of each kind the Guénégaud contained: three seating 12 people, thirteen seating eight people, five seating six people, and seven seating four people. On only one occasion in the Registres is an indication given as to the location of any of these boxes. This occurs on 26 February 1677, when reference is made to the taking of 'quatre loges et deux balcons à 33 livres' (R IV, 129). A 'balcon' was the seventeenth-century equivalent of what was later to be known as a loge d'avant-scène. It had previously been supposed that the Guénégaud was one of the first theatres to be equipped with such boxes. Barbara Mittman in her various articles on spectators on the stage in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries makes no mention of the existence of stage boxes in any theatre constructed

earlier,¹³¹ and Christian Delmas follows her in his article 'Sur un décor de Dom Juan', in which he equates the 'deux petits balcons' enumerated in the marché for the construction of the décors for that play with the 'deux balcons dorés' mentioned by Sauval in his description of the interior of the Palais-Royal and which ran the length of the auditorium. Delmas has since revised this view, and now believes these two 'balcons' to have been loges d'avant-scène, adding that there is evidence that the Marais, too, possessed such boxes, certainly from 1663 onwards, and possibly from as early as 1655, when its stage was adapted for the revival of the first machine play, Pierre Corneille's Andromède: 'Le machiniste Denis Buffequin demanda alors aux comédiens "de faire avancer incontinent leur théâtre aussi avant qu'il sera nécessaire pour parvenir à l'effet de ladite construction" et perfection des machines: "il s'ensuit, commente W. Deierkauf,¹³² que les deux premières loges de côté ne se trouvaient plus au-delà de la scène, mais au-dessus de celle-ci"'.¹³³ In fact, loges d'avant-scène may have existed in the French theatre even earlier than Delmas believes, since the 'Devis et marché' for the renovation of the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1647, calls for 'la démolition de toutes les loges tant sur le théâtre qu'à côté'.¹³⁴

The presence of some stage seating at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1717 would seem to be suggested by the sketches of Sir James

¹³¹ 'Les Spectateurs sur la scène: quelques chiffres tirés des registres du XVII^e siècle', Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre, 32 (1980), pp. 199-215; 'Make way for the mailman! spectators on the stage in Paris theatres of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', Theatre Survey, 22 (1981), pp. 1-15; 'Cinq documents'.

¹³² Marais, II, 70; c.f. p. 222.

¹³³ 'Des loges d'avant-scène', p. 128.

¹³⁴ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 184.

Thornhill,¹³⁵ and by 1781 this theatre had certainly acquired two 'loges grillées' seating six spectators 'sur la scène', as well as two baignoires seating four and two 'loges d'avant-scène' seating six on both the first and second rows.¹³⁶ The new Comédie-Française which opened in 1689, had on its first and second rows two loges d'avant-scène on either side of the stage, identical in size and capacity to the eight-seater side boxes.¹³⁷

Barbara Mittman maintains that stage boxes were only constructed at the Guénégaud in 1676-7,¹³⁸ this being, as we have seen, the season when such 'balcons' are mentioned in the Registres for the first time. Loges had been taken at this price prior to this date, however, at six performances of Circé in 1674-5 (24, 26, 29 and 31 March, 2 and 5 April 1675; R II, 142-7), and at three during 1675-6 (26 April, 7 July and 6 August 1675; R III, 2, 33, 46), as well as at an earlier performance in 1676-7, when on 5 January 1677, M. le Lieutenant Criminel took such a box for Pradon's Phèdre et Hippolyte (R IV, 108). If, as seems likely, the term loges used in this way could also include loges d'avant-scène or balcons, this would seem to indicate that stage boxes existed at the Guénégaud prior to the 1676-7 date Mittman gives for their construction. Christian Delmas, while reiterating Mittman's assertion that: 'L'existence de loges d'avant-scène n'est pas attestée en France avant le théâtre Guénégaud pour la saison 1676-1677',¹³⁹ suggests in his article on stage boxes at the Palais-Royal that such boxes may have been used prior to this date to free the stage of spectators when machine

¹³⁵ Barlow, 'Hôtel de Bourgogne', Plate 3.

¹³⁶ Lagrave, Théâtre et public, p. 90.

¹³⁷ Roubo, Traité, p. 28.

¹³⁸ Mittman, 'Spectateurs', p. 208.

¹³⁹ 'Des loges d'avant-scène', p. 125.

plays were being presented: 'Elles ont été ouvertes au théâtre Guénégaud pour remédier à l'exclusion des spectateurs de la scène lors des pièces à machines: il n'y a pas de spectateurs de 'théâtre' aux représentations de Circé en 1675'.¹⁴⁰ Delmas does not, however, draw the obvious conclusion from this: that stage boxes must have existed at the Guénégaud prior to 1676-7; nor does he mention the hiring of boxes at 33 livres from 1675 onwards.

In fact, given that other theatres had possessed this type of box before 1673-4, it would seem likely that the Guénégaud was equipped with loges d'avant-scène from the moment of its first transformation from a jeu de paume into an opera house. This is all the more probable in that Lully's opera house in the rue de Vaugirard which opened some eighteen months after the Guénégaud and which, according to Jullien and Boislisle, was designed by the same man, Henri Guichard,¹⁴¹ also had stage boxes. Ménestrier in his Des Représentations en musique, describes how they were ingeniously employed for the prologue of the first opera to be presented there, Les Fêtes de l'Amour et de Bacchus of 1672:

Je ne sais, si l'Italie en a jamais fait d'aussi plaisant que celui que fit l'Académie Royale de Musique, l'an 1672 lorsqu'ayant fait paraître une grande salle disposée pour un spectacle magnifique, on y découvrit une multitude de gens de provinces différentes, placées dans des balcons aux deux côtés du théâtre. Un homme qui devait donner des livres aux acteurs se mit à danser dès que la toile fut levée, et toute cette multitude qui était dans les

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. This assertion is not entirely accurate, however. The sale of thirteen tickets is entered under the heading théâtre at a performance of Circé on 17 September 1675 (R II, 65), but as this was a performance à l'ordre when the stage and first row of boxes alone shared the same ticket price, and as the sole entry under the latter heading is for one box at 44 livres, it would seem that the théâtre entry in fact refers to tickets sold individually for the first row of boxes.

¹⁴¹ Jullien, Salles de l'Opéra, pp. 440-1.

balcons s'écria en musique pour lui demander des livres....¹⁴²

This is an adaptation of the first entry of the fifth act ballet of Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme for which Lully had originally provided the music and which he was, therefore, entitled to appropriate: 'Un homme vient donner les livres du ballet, qui d'abord est fatigué par une multitude de gens de provinces différentes, qui crient en musique pour en avoir, et par trois importuns, qu'il trouve toujours sur ses pas'.¹⁴³

Given the fact that at the Guénégaud all hirings of boxes at 33 livres prior to 1676-7 were at performances of Circé, it would seem that Delmas's general conclusion as to the use of stage boxes for machine plays is correct. From January 1677, however, and for the remainder of the Guénégaud's activity, boxes at 33 livres began to be taken for every type of play presented, and it is interesting that shortly afterwards a certain amount of structural and decorative work was carried out in this area of the house, presumably to make the stage boxes safer and more suitable for this increased occupation. Thus, on 25 June 1677, 4 livres were paid 'pour peintures du balcon'; on 31 August 1677, 7 livres were paid 'pour de la tapisserie pour les balcons'; and on 28 November 1677 11 livres were paid to M. Barbier 'pour avoir fait des appuis aux balcons du théâtre' (R V, 22, 50, 88). More work was carried out a year later when, on 28 October 1678, the maître tapissier M. Boudet was paid 135 livres 'pour avoir garni les bancs du théâtre et des balcons' (R VI, 102). Finally, in 1679, new boxes were constructed altogether, but we do not know in which area of the house (R VII, 50 v°).

If up to January 1677, stage boxes at the Guénégaud were, as Delmas contends, almost exclusively used to free the stage for machine

¹⁴² Ménéstrier, Des représentations en musique (Paris, 1681), p. 214.

¹⁴³ Molière, Oeuvres complètes, II, 779.

plays, it might seem curious that we have references to boxes being taken at 33 livres solely for productions of Circé, when L'Inconnu and Le Triomphe des dames as well as other plays containing spectacular elements were also presented in this period. Tickets may have been sold for the stage boxes, however, without boxes having been taken as units, in which case such sales may have been entered under the heading premières loges. In fact, tickets are recorded as having been sold for the stage on one occasion at a performance of L'Inconnu prior to the change in occupation of the stage boxes, when seventeen were taken on 17 March 1676 (R III, 143). Frequently, however, the entry of sales of tickets for the stage for L'Inconnu was grouped together with that for the premières loges, and this was shown by bracketing the two headings together. This occurred at twenty-three of the play's thirty-five performances in 1675-6 and 1676-7. On a further two occasions, when the play was still being performed au double, and seats in the amphithéâtre as well as those on the stage and in the premières loges cost 5 livres 10 sols, all three headings were bracketed together and a single entry of sales at that price recorded (R III, 102-3).

This practice of bracketing headings together occurs frequently in the Registres, particularly during the seasons 1675-6, 1676-7 and 1677-8, as the following chart shows:

BRACKETING TOGETHER OF HEADINGS IN THE GUENEGAUD REGISTRES

SEASON	TOTAL PERFS	TH + Ll TOG	%	TH, Ll + A TOG	%	Ll + A TOG	%
1673-4	108	0	0	0	0	0	0
1674-5	145	0	0	0	0	1	0.7
1675-6	146	29	19.8	10	6.8	2	1.4
1676-7	131	13	9.9	9	6.9	6	4.6
1677-8	144	3	2.1	13	9.0	2	1.4
1678-9	163	0	0	1	0.6	0	0
1679-80	179	0	0	0	0	2	1.1
1680-1	77	0	0	0	0	0	0

It is possible, however, that the practice may have been applied still more frequently without it always being explicitly stated in the Registres. We have already seen that at performances of Circé in 1674-5 and 1675-6, the heading théâtre was left empty, that boxes hired as single units were entered under premières loges, and that an extraordinarily high figure for single ticket sales was entered under amphithéâtre, which may have included sales for the stage and first row of boxes. A similar system seems to have been employed at six of the first eight performances of L'Inconnu (17, 22, 24, 26, 29 November and 1 December 1675), although the sales recorded under amphithéâtre are not nearly as high, and again on 24 March 1676 (R III, 93, 95-9, 146). Similarly, a single figure for the sale of individual tickets for the most expensive areas of the house is recorded at all performances of Le Triomphe des dames up to September 1676, although this was at different times entered under théâtre, premières loges and amphithéâtre. In fact, on only four occasions is this policy of inclusive entry not adhered to in relation to this play, when on 20 and 22 November and 22 and 27 December 1676 we find separate entries for the théâtre and the premières loges (R IV, 90-1, 103-4). This practice of inclusive entry makes any analysis of attendances at the Guénégaud extremely hazardous, unless in such an analysis seating areas are grouped together by price, and it is, therefore, quite possible that tickets were sold for the loges d'avant-scène at performances of machine plays other than Circé.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ Barbara Mittman, in her study of stage seating at the Guénégaud, elects to divide up these bracketed entries as follows: 'Lorsque les places de théâtre et de loge sont comptées ensemble, 30% de celles louées sont estimées être des places de théâtre; lorsque les places d'amphithéâtre sont confondues avec celles du théâtre et des loges, cette estimation tombe à 16% ('Spectateurs', p. 204). This would seem highly dangerous: firstly one could dispute the accuracy of her percentages, since they are based on figures for only one season - that of 1672-3 covered by the 'Registre d'Hubert'; and, secondly, she fails to take into consideration the phenomenon of unstated grouping examined above.

Having established that the Guénégaud almost certainly possessed loges d'avant-scène from the time of its first opening in 1673-4 and probably before, it remains to determine if any of the variously sized boxes mentioned in the Registres in addition to those at 33 livres were situated on the stage, and which boxes were in the auditorium proper. As we have seen, the most usual capacity for a box in this period was eight people, seated in two rows of four. Boxes of this type formed the side rows at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, Marais and Palais-Royal theatres, as well as at the Comédie-Française of 1689. At the Guénégaud we have seen the existence of thirteen such boxes. It would seem likely that there were, in fact, fourteen, and that they were arranged in two rows of seven along either side of the auditorium, running from the front of the stage to the rear of the amphithéâtre, either parallel to each other or more probably angled in after a certain point as at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in Thornhill's sketches. If this were the case, the Guénégaud would have had exactly the same number of eight-seater side boxes as the Hôtel de Bourgogne described by Thornhill in 1717, the Italian actors in 1787, and, more recently D.H. Roy, when attempting to estimate its disposition in the seventeenth century.¹⁴⁵

If, as seems likely, the eight-seater boxes were arranged along the sides of the auditorium, we have to determine which boxes would have been situated at the end, to the rear of the amphithéâtre. Thanks to the entry in the account books referring to the hiring of 'balcons' at 33 livres, we know that some if not all of the six-seater boxes were positioned on the stage (R IV, 129). This leaves the twelve-seaters and the four-seaters as possible loges de fond. Deciding which of these is the more likely is not easy, since in other theatres we find both types

¹⁴⁵ Barlow, 'Hôtel de Bourgogne', Fig. 2; Lagrave, Théâtre et public, p. 90; Roy, 'Scène de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne', Planche 1.

in the rear position, and the matter is further complicated by the fact that the Hôtel de Bourgogne had six-seater loges de fond on its lower level in 1781.¹⁴⁶ The plans of the Palais-Royal published by Lagrave, illustrating the interior as remodelled by Vigarani in 1673, show at the rear of the amphithéâtre on both the first and second rows, three boxes which although the same width as the side boxes are deep enough to contain three benches, and which would, therefore, each have seated twelve spectators.¹⁴⁷ Also, Lagrave calculates that at the 1689 Comédie-Française the six rear boxes on the second row were slightly larger than the others and would each have seated ten spectators. On the lower level, however, the passage giving access to the amphithéâtre cut through what would have been the central loge de fond, thus reducing its capacity to four.¹⁴⁸ The post-1673 Palais-Royal had two such passages, one on either side of the amphithéâtre, making a four-seater clavicule of the box at the rear end of each side row.¹⁴⁹ If we compare the plans published by Lagrave with the Blondel plan of the Palais-Royal, we see that in the latter the boxes at either end of the side rows together with the the three loges de fond have been broken up to form ten small four-seater boxes, and that the two entries to the amphithéâtre have been reduced to a single central passage.¹⁵⁰ As the Blondel plan dates from 1754, and those in the Archives Nationales published by Lagrave are copies of plans he believes to have been made at an earlier time,¹⁵¹ the introduction of smaller boxes to the rear of the amphithéâtre would

¹⁴⁶ Lagrave, Théâtre et public, p. 90.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., Figs. 8 and 9.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 80.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., Fig. 8.

¹⁵⁰ Beijer, 'Ballet de la prospérité', Fig. 12.

¹⁵¹ Lagrave, Théâtre et public, p. 84.

appear to be a later, eighteenth-century innovation in theatre design. It is, therefore, more likely that the Guénégaud had three twelve-seater loges de fond, according with the three boxes at 66 livres whose existence we know of from the Registres. Some measure of confirmation of this theory is found in the fact that the Hôtel de Bourgogne, where in the eighteenth century the boxes facing the stage on the ground row consisted of '2 clavicules à 4 places ... 4 loges de face à 6 places ... 2 loges de face à 3 places', had on its second and third levels '3 loges de face à 12 places ... 2 clavicules à 4 places'.¹⁵² That this theatre had, earlier in the century, possessed similar large boxes on its lower level too, is indicated by Thornhill's sketch made in 1717, which shows three loges de fond. Barlow, in his interpretation of this document and his plan of the theatre based on it, ascribes to these boxes the same depth and width and, therefore, the same capacity as the eight-seater side boxes. As the depth of the loges de fond is not precisely indicated in Thornhill's sketch, however, they may well have seated twelve people in three rows just like those at the Palais-Royal under Lully.¹⁵³ This is all the more likely in that in the 'Devis et marché' of work to be carried out at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1647, the depth of the boxes to be constructed is not specified, it simply being stated that they should be 'de la profondeur qui sera nécessaire'. Similarly, it is merely instructed that they should contain 'les sièges et marchepieds qui se trouveront nécessaires'.¹⁵⁴

Having established the most likely positions for the eight and twelve-seater boxes were along the sides and rear of the Guénégaud auditorium, it follows that the five six-seater and certain of the seven

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 90.

¹⁵³ Barlow, 'Hôtel de Bourgogne', Plate 3 and Fig. 2.

¹⁵⁴ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 183-4.

four-seater boxes of whose existence we are aware were probably situated on the stage, although it is highly likely that two of the latter took the form of clavicules allowing for access to the amphithéâtre. Hirings of boxes at 22 livres are recorded under three different headings in the Guénégaud Registres: premières loges, amphithéâtre and loges hautes. The second of these can be disregarded since all such entries occur in 1679-80 and 1680-1, when the amphithéâtre heading was, as we have seen, being used systematically to enter figures relating to the premières loges. This leaves the entries in the premières loges and loges hautes sections. At first one might be tempted to think that all of these relate to the lower row of boxes and that some were merely entered under a different heading through oversight. As such entries occur on eight different occasions, however, such a theory would hardly seem to be tenable, especially when we consider that at a performance of Iphigénie by Le Clerc and Coras on 24 May 1675, three boxes were taken at 22 livres in the premières loges section, and one in the loges hautes (R III, 14). What is more, the two types of boxes would seem to be distinct as far as the types of plays for which they were taken is concerned. Thus, those in the premières loges are comparable to the boxes at 33 livres in that, with the exception of the performance of Iphigénie previously mentioned, all entries before January 1677 refer to the hiring of boxes for performances of Circé (R II, 140-7; III, 1, 9, 18). Of the four entries for boxes at 22 livres in the loges hautes section prior to January 1677, however, none relates to the performance of a machine play: one is for the above performance of Iphigénie, the others for Georges Dandin and L'Ecole des maris on 15 February 1675, and Tartuffe on 19 and 24 February 1675 (R II, 133, 135, 137).

This leads me to suppose that there may have been three different kinds of boxes at 22 livres: firstly, loges d'avant-scène, generally

entered under the heading premières loges; secondly, two clavicules in the first row of boxes giving access to the amphithéâtre, also entered under premières loges; and thirdly, directly above them, a further two clavicules entered under loges hautes. It is the existence of the latter type of box at 22 livres that is most doubtful. The Hôtel de Bourgogne possessed clavicules in both its first and second rows of boxes in 1781, although the Palais-Royal only had them on its lower level.¹⁵⁵ That the Guénégaud, too, had such second row clavicules could be seen to be indicated by the fact that at no time are more than two boxes at 22 livres entered under the heading loges hautes. Possible arguments to the contrary, however, are that at this upper level access to the amphithéâtre would probably have been unnecessary, and so to have clavicules instead of eight-seater boxes would have been to fail to capitalize on all the available space, as well as the fact that 22 livres would have been a disproportionate price to pay for a box seating four people in an area where the price of a ticket à l'ordre was only 1 livre 10 sols.

Another theory to explain these two different types of entry might be that the loges d'avant-scène contained boxes at 22 livres on both levels, and that occasionally those on the upper level were used at performances other than those of machine plays even before this came to be the usual practice, and that such figures were entered under the heading loges hautes. In fact, after 1 January 1677, boxes at 22 livres were entered under the heading loges hautes on only four occasions, and three of these occurred during that same month - on 3, 22 and 24 January 1677 and 5 February 1679 (R IV, 107, 115-6; VI, 143). In either case we must suppose that people occasionally sat in stage boxes at performances other than of machine plays earlier than it has hitherto been supposed,

¹⁵⁵ Lagrave, Théâtre et public, Figs. 8 and 9.

since three premières loges at 22 livres were taken for Iphigénie on 24 May 1675, when there could only possibly have been two clavicules on the lower level (R III, 14).

Stage boxes are clearly visible in the two engravings of the Alexandre painting supposedly illustrating the Guénégaud stage. In the later Mariette version of the engraving published by Brockett,¹⁵⁶ four boxes on one side of the stage are visible, two completely and two partially. They are arranged in two rows, one above the other, with two benches for spectators seated 'on the stage' directly in front of them. The rear of these two benches is raised above the level of the first so as to improve visibility, though remaining below the level of the first row of stage boxes. It is clear in this version of the engraving that the stage boxes are of different sizes, since the two which can only be partially seen appear larger than the two which appear in their entirety. This impression is confirmed by the fact that in each of the smaller boxes two spectators are positioned immediately behind the front partition with a third looking over from the rear, whereas in the lower of the two larger boxes three people can be seen in a single row with no-one behind. It would seem likely, therefore, that the smaller of these boxes could seat four people in two rows, and that the larger could seat six people in two rows. In the original version of the engraving, however, only two stage boxes are visible, one above the other, together with a portion of the two adjacent to them.¹⁵⁷ It is, therefore, almost impossible to calculate the comparative sizes of the stage boxes from this document. And since in the second version, the area not shown as a result of the arched form of the first has been

¹⁵⁶ Brockett, History, p. 272.

¹⁵⁷ Vanuxem, 'Décor de théâtre', p. 208.

filled in at a later date, it must be considered all the more unreliable.

It has hitherto been supposed that the only provision for spectators on the stage in the majority of seventeenth-century French theatres consisted of two benches, one on either side of the stage.¹⁵⁸ At the Guénégaud, such benches did exist, as we have seen, but they were positioned two on either side of the stage in front of the loges d'avant-scène. Such benches generally seated approximately forty spectators, and this also appears to have been the case at the Guénégaud, where in the first three seasons of its activity this figure is only exceeded on one occasion when forty-four people sat on the stage at a performance of Iphigénie on 26 May 1675 (R III, 15). Neither was this figure exceeded for the greater part of 1676-7, for, although fifty-five tickets are recorded as having been sold for the stage at a performance of Le Triomphe des dames on 7 August 1676, this is probably an instance of unified entry; and when the sale of forty-six tickets is entered under théâtre for a performance of Le Misanthrope and George Dandin on 8 November 1676, this was probably because the entries for this heading and that of premières loges were accidentally reversed (R IV, 45, 85).

However, as from January 1677, figures exceeding forty are regularly entered under the heading théâtre (on nine occasions during the first three months of this year alone), thus confirming the introduction of the practice of opening up the stage boxes to the public for all kinds of performances. It would seem, therefore, that prior to January 1677, when the stage boxes alone were used to leave the stage free for the production of machine plays, since no spectators were seated on the benches actually on the stage, this heading was left empty

¹⁵⁸ Mittman, 'Spectateurs', p. 207.

and the figures for the occupation of the stage boxes entered under that of premières loges. After January 1677, when the stage boxes began to be used for all types of plays, and when the benches in front of them were occupied the greater part of the time,¹⁵⁹ sales of tickets for both the stage benches and the stage boxes appear to have been entered together under the heading théâtre. Figures relating to the hiring of stage boxes as single units were still, however, entered under the heading premières loges. For example, such entries were made for thirteen of the forty-seven performances of La Devineresse (R VII, 118-57).

If we suppose that at the Guénégaud were positioned on either side of the stage two boxes at 22 livres and two at 33 livres, seating four and six people in two rows, and with an identical row of boxes above,¹⁶⁰ and if we allow 1.5 pieds (1.6 ft., 0.5 m.) in width per person as before, the boxes for four would have measured 3 pieds (3.2 ft., 1.0 m.) in width and the boxes for six, 4.5 pieds (4.8 ft., 1.5 m.). This gives us a total length for each row of side boxes of 15 pieds (16.0 ft., 4.9 m.), and each of the two benches in front of these rows would have measured the same. Using the same method we can calculate that each bench would have seated ten people, giving the four benches a total capacity of forty spectators, identical to that deduced from the audience statistics for this area of the house.

The stage boxes themselves would have had a capacity of eighty spectators, forty seated in the upper and forty in the lower row. Together with the stage benches, this would have given a total behind

¹⁵⁹ There was no creation of a machine play between Le Triomphe des dames in 1676 and La Devineresse in November 1679, and the only revivals were those of L'Inconnu which was given six performances in 1678-9 and six in 1679-80.

¹⁶⁰ This would be identical to the arrangement of stage boxes to be found at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1781 and probably earlier (Lagrave, Théâtre et public, p. 90).

the curtain capacity of 120 seats. This figure was exceeded only twice during the period of the Guénégaud's activity: on 23 April 1679, when 126 spectators occupied this area at a performance of Thomas Corneille's Ariane; and by a larger margin on 4 February 1680, when the sale of 135 tickets for this area is recorded for a performance of the same author's La Devineresse (R VII, 6, 145). The latter instance is particularly interesting in that the production of La Devineresse necessitated the use of certain elaborate special effects, and one might have expected the stage benches to have been cleared, thus reducing the behind the curtain capacity to eighty seats. This, clearly, was not done on this occasion. Indeed, it is doubtful if the stage benches were cleared at any of the performances of La Devineresse, since the eighty capacity figure for the stage boxes was exceeded at nineteen of its forty-seven performances.

Putting all these figures together, the Guénégaud would have been able to seat on the stage, in the loges d'avant-scène and first row of boxes the following numbers of people:

stage benches	40
8 stage boxes (lower)	40
8 stage boxes (upper)	40
14 side boxes	112
3 rear boxes	36
2 clavicules	8
total	276

If we add the 120 estimated capacity of the amphithéâtre to this figure, this gives us a total for the most expensive seats in the house of 396. In fact, the Guénégaud appears never to have played to capacity in these areas, coming nearest to it in 1674-5 with the first nine performances of Circé, which with one exception (5 April 1675), all attracted more than 250 people to the most expensive seats, and on four occasions, more than 325 (336 on 22 March, 344 on 29 March, 326 on 31 March and 328 on 2 April; R II, 140-7). It should be remembered, however, that Circé is a

machine play from the earlier period of the Guénégaud's activity, for which the stage benches would probably have been cleared, thus reducing the number of most expensive seats to 356.

The second row of boxes almost certainly consisted of an exact replica of those in the row below. It would appear, however, with the possible exceptions already considered, that the stage boxes were generally entered under the headings premières loges or théâtre regardless of whether they were on the upper or lower level. This, therefore, gives us a capacity for the loges hautes as follows:

14 side boxes	112
3 rear boxes	36
2 <u>clavicules</u>	8
total	156

This creates certain problems, for this figure was exceeded on forty-seven occasions during the period of the Guénégaud's activity. Even if we add to it the forty seats represented by the upper row of stage boxes, this only gives a total of 196, which was, itself, exceeded on twenty-one occasions, the highest recorded figure being 251 at a performance of La Devineresse on 14 January 1680 (R VII, 137). We can only suppose that as on all but two of these occasions (Circé, 13 October 1675 and La Devineresse, 31 December 1679) (R II, 78; VII, 131), no entry is recorded under the heading amphithéâtre, this area was used for overspill from the second row of boxes. This problem of impossibly large numbers of people being recorded as having sat in the loges hautes is not exclusive to the Guénégaud. Molière's Palais-Royal possessed rows of seventeen eight-seater boxes, thus seating approximately 136 people on its upper level, yet 206 tickets were sold for the loges hautes at a performance of Psyché on 6 January 1673.¹⁶¹ The problem is still more acute at the Comédie-Française of 1689 which Lagrave estimates to have

¹⁶¹ 'Registre d'Hubert', p. 102.

seated some 200 people in its second row, and yet on 18 March 1752, 458 tickets were sold.¹⁶²

Box interiors appear to have been very much the same in all the theatres for which we have details, and, as we have little information relating specifically to the Guénégaud, we can only suppose the boxes there to have been no exception. The standard, eight-seater side box was 1 toise (6.4 ft., 1.95 m.) wide, and, at the Marais, 1 toise high and 4 pieds (4.3 ft., 1.3 m.) deep. The front and sides of each box were closed to a height of 3 pieds (3.2 ft., 1.0 m.), with the boxes further being separated by bars situated between their side partitions and the ceilings. Access was by means of a door in the rear wall of each box. At the Hôtel de Bourgogne, these doors could be locked. At the Marais, each of the side boxes contained two benches 10 pouces (0.9 ft., 0.3 m.) wide and a foot-rest. They were further equipped with a battant or moveable seat attached to the rear bench, presumably to allow access to those in front. The rear boxes, although the same size as those along the sides of the auditorium, contained only three seats. No details are given of the seating provided in the Hôtel de Bourgogne's boxes, it simply being stated in the 'Devis et marché' of 1647, that they should contain 'les sièges et marchepieds qui se trouveront nécessaires'.¹⁶³

The Guénégaud, as we have seen, possessed boxes of varying capacities, although their construction was, no doubt, similar to those discussed above. It would seem, however, that at the Guénégaud certain boxes were equipped with chairs rather than benches, since a considerable number were purchased on behalf of the company - for example, in January 1677, 'deux douzaines de chaises à 9 livres la

¹⁶² Lagrave, Théâtre et public, p. 79.

¹⁶³ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, I, 195-6; Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 183-4, Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, pp. 351-2.

douzaine, plus une autre douzaine à 7 livres 10 sols (R IV, 109 v^o). Those benches there were, were upholstered, for on 28 October 1678, the 'maître tapissier' Boudet was paid 135 livres 'pour avoir garni les bancs du théâtre et des balcons' (R VI, 102). The use of tapestry was not confined to these areas of the house, for in August 1679, 29 livres 10 sols were paid 'au tapissier pour les loges' (R VII, 50 v^o).

Theatre boxes were frequently decorated both inside and out. The 'Devis des ouvrages de peinture' relating to work to be carried out at the Palais-Royal prior to the installation there of the Académie Royale de Musique provides us with an example of the type of decoration that could be found:

... les premières loges seront peintes de balustres demi bosse de pierre, au-dessus desquels il y aura aux uns des cartouches avec des festons aux deux côtés, et aux autres un soleil avec deux cornes d'abondance. Dans les cartouches seront des devises.

Aux deuxièmes loges, il y aura des balustrades d'entrelacs de pierre enrichis d'ornements jaunes, et dans le milieu il y aura dans un rond ou ovale une L couronnée et dans un autre un soleil.

Aux troisièmes loges, il y aura des bas-reliefs dans des panneaux. Il y aura au milieu les dieux de la fable en bas-relief de stuc.

Tous les montants seront peints depuis les premières loges jusqu'aux troisièmes loges.

Tous les dedans des loges imprimés à détrampe de grisailles.¹⁶⁴

As we have seen, the so-called 'troisièmes loges' were not in fact true boxes at all, but rather a kind of gallery running around the auditorium above the second row of boxes, in which spectators were free to move about as they pleased. Given the space required to operate stage machinery from the flies or above stage area, it is unlikely that this gallery extended above the loges d'avant-scène, and indeed, no such third seating level can be seen in either of the engravings which

¹⁶⁴ Cordey, 'Lully installe l'Opéra', p. 140.

feature what is possibly the Guénégaud stage. Troisièmes loges of this kind, sometimes known as the paradis, were also in existence at both the rebuilt Marais and Hôtel de Bourgogne theatres of 1644 and 1647 respectively.¹⁶⁵ They were, however, a rather late addition to Molière's Palais-Royal theatre, only being installed as part of the refurbishment undertaken in preparation for the production of Psyché in 1671.¹⁶⁶

The troisièmes loges would probably have contained benches for two rows of spectators over those boxes 4 pieds deep, and benches for three rows over those six pieds deep. This was certainly the case at the Palais-Royal as illustrated in the plans conserved in the Archives Nationales, where the two passages giving access to the third row of boxes were positioned in such a way as to increase the space available for the three rows of benches.¹⁶⁷ It is most likely that this was also the case at the Guénégaud. If so, we can calculate that the troisièmes loges there would have had a capacity of 164 spectators.¹⁶⁸ The highest number of spectators recorded as having occupied this area of the house is 100 at a performance of Montfleury's Trigaudin on 4 February 1674, 105 at Circé on 2 April 1675 and 111 at La Devineresse on 18 February 1680 (R I, 92; II, 146; VII, 151). The troisièmes loges do not, in fact, appear to have been a popular area of the house. Indeed, at 483 of the Guénégaud's 1,093 performances (just over 44%), they seated fewer than

¹⁶⁵ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, I, 196-7; Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 184.

¹⁶⁶ La Grange, Registre, I, 125.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., Fig. 10.

¹⁶⁸ At the Marais theatre, however, where the raised amphithéâtre occupied the upper levels of the auditorium facing the stage, the troisièmes loges consisted of a single bench running above the second row of boxes from the rear of the auditorium to a position level with the front of the stage (Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, I, 197).

ten spectators. This leads me to suppose that they may have provided yet another possible overspill area for the second row of boxes.

Capacity

Putting together all our figures, therefore, the total capacity of the Guénégaud theatre can be estimated as follows:

<u>Parterre</u>	600 (607) ¹⁶⁹
<u>Amphithéâtre</u>	120 (125)
<u>Théâtre</u>	40 (44)
<u>Loges d'avant-scène</u>	80
<u>Premières loges</u>	156
<u>Deuxièmes loges</u>	156
<u>Troisièmes loges</u>	164
 Total	 1,316

When we compare this with the capacities of other theatres as given by Lagrave (Hôtel de Bourgogne: 1,528; Palais-Royal: 1,270; Comédie-Française: 1,456 - 1,506),¹⁷⁰ we see that the size of the Guénégaud was in no way disproportionate to that of other contemporary theatres. There is no evidence, therefore, to support Lancaster's contention, based on the sometimes misleading records of ticket sales, that 'The Guénégaud theater must have been considerably larger than the Hôtel de Bourgogne'.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ The figures given are my estimates of the usual capacity of each area of the house. It did, however, occasionally occur that larger numbers of people were squeezed in. Where this is the case, the largest recorded attendance for that area of the house is given in brackets.

¹⁷⁰ Théâtre et public, pp. 79-90. Roubo is, in fact, quoted by Lagrave as giving a somewhat lower figure for the Comédie-Française of 1,306 (I, 51).

¹⁷¹ History, IV, 42.

STAGE

We have already seen that, according to the terms of the lease passed on 8 October 1670 between Sourdéac and Champeron on the one hand and Maximilien de Laffemas on the other, in addition to the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille, the two entrepreneurs also hired two adjacent houses and courtyards, and 4 toises 1 pied (26.6 ft., 8.1 m.) of a wheelwright's workshop situated to one end of the jeu de paume. A new wall was to be constructed separating what remained of the wheelwright's land from the extension to the theatre building which was to rise to some considerable height above it. This was the end of the building at which the stage was to be erected.¹⁷² This has led us to conclude that the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille was specifically adapted by Sourdéac and Champeron so as to be suitable for Perrin's spectacular operatic productions. Thus the additional elevation would have allowed for the manipulation of complicated stage machinery as well as, possibly, the installation of an upper stage level. The demands of the counterbalance systems which operated the stage machinery also meant that it was necessary for Sourdéac and Champeron to excavate more than 20 pieds (21.3 ft., 6.5 m.) below ground level at the stage end of the building.¹⁷³

According to Nutter and Thoinan, the stage at the Guénégaud theatre was 30 pieds (32 ft., 9.7 m.) wide. They determine this from the fact that a 'maquette de décoration' for Molière's Psyché by the painter Pizzoli in the Archives of the Comédie-Française bears a scale in toises from which the stage width can be calculated. As this maquette has been

¹⁷² Pougin, Créateurs, p. 299.

¹⁷³ Nutter and Thoinan, Origines, p. 144.

countersigned by both La Grange and Le Comte, it clearly dates from the period when the Comédie-Française was operating at the Guénégaud.¹⁷⁴

Additional information is provided by a mémoire by the painter Pierre Prat for the items he had furnished for the Guénégaud's creation of Montauban's comedy Les Aventures et le mariage de Panurge. This itemizes:

Premièrement huit bandes de mer contenant vingt pieds de long sur quatre pieds de haut, de plus la perspective de dix-sept pieds de large sur neuf pieds et demi de haut, de plus une toile d'horizon en tempête, de plus quatorze aîles de rocher ... d'un côté que de l'autre, de plus une barque peinte, le tout montant à vingt pistoles.
(R II, 53 v°)

This document is erroneously interpreted by H.C. Lancaster, who states that 'some idea of <the Guénégaud's> stage may be gained from the fact that the perspective for performances of Panurge was 17 feet in length and that on either side of it there was a 'bande de mer' 20 feet in length'.¹⁷⁵ This would give an approximate stage width of some 57 pieds (60.8 ft., 18.5 m.). In fact, a more likely configuration would have been with the eight 'bandes de mer' positioned between the 'aîles de rocher' with the perspective flats behind them and the 'toile d'horizon' or backdrop closing up the rear of the stage. This would give a stage width of approximately 37 pieds (39.4 ft., 12 m.), and possibly less bearing in mind that these scenic elements would almost certainly have overlapped one another.¹⁷⁶ The disparity between this figure and the 30

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 147-8.

¹⁷⁵ Lancaster, History, IV, 42.

¹⁷⁶ This, of course, implies that the width of the perspective scenery was 17 pieds (18.1 ft., 5.5 m.) overall, and that it was divided into two, with half being positioned on either side of the stage. Otherwise the total width of the stage would have been an impossibly large 58 pieds (61.8 ft., 18.8 m.).

pieds (32 ft., 9.75 m.) given by Nutter and Thoinan could also be explained by the fact that along the sides of the stage were positioned, as we have seen, two rows of loges d'avant-scène, each 4 pieds (4.3 ft., 1.3 m.) in depth. The scenic elements would have been positioned behind these, and it could, therefore, have been the case that the width of the stage between the boxes was 30 pieds, whereas the actual width of the stage was 38 pieds (40.5 ft., 9.75 m.).

We can make some attempt to calculate the depth of the Guénégaud stage by comparing it with those of other seventeenth-century theatres. From 1647 onwards, the stage of the Hôtel de Bourgogne was roughly square, measuring 7 toises or 42 pieds (44.8 ft., 13.6 m.) in width,¹⁷⁷ and 7 toises 1 pied or 43 pieds (45.8 ft., 14 m.) in depth.¹⁷⁸ A similarly square stage, though somewhat larger, was that of the Petit-Bourbon, which had an identical width and depth measurement of 8 toises or 48 pieds (51.2 ft., 15.6 m.).¹⁷⁹ The stage at the Marais theatre was rather narrower than either of these, measuring 6 toises or 36 pieds (38.4 ft., 11.7 m.) in width.¹⁸⁰ It was originally not as deep either, measuring 6.5 toises or 36.5 pieds (38.9 ft., 11.9 m.) in 1644,¹⁸¹ of which 5 toises 3 pieds (35.2 ft., 10.7 m.) comprised the actual acting area.¹⁸² In 1663 the stage depth was extended to 8.5 toises or 51 pieds (54.4 ft., 16.6 m.).¹⁸³ The stage of Molière's Palais-Royal theatre had

¹⁷⁷ Fogarty, 'Reconstruction', p. 1; Roy, 'Scène de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne', p. 230. Wiley gives the approximate figure of 'around 41 feet' ('Hôtel de Bourgogne', p. 79).

¹⁷⁸ Wiley, 'Hôtel de Bourgogne', p. 84.

¹⁷⁹ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Mise-en-scène, p. 28.

¹⁸⁰ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, I, 194.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Golder, 'Théâtre du Marais', pp. 138-41.

¹⁸³ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, II, 70.

a width measurement of 5 toises or 30 pieds (32 ft., 9.75 m.), identical to that of the Guénégaud as given by Nutter and Thoinan, and a depth measurement of 8.5 toises or 51 pieds (54.4 ft., 16.6 m.), identical to that of the Marais after 1663.¹⁸⁴ Considering these statistics, and bearing in mind that the Marais, too, was largely given over to spectacular productions, it would seem likely, therefore, that the Guénégaud theatre had a similar stage depth of 8.5 toises.

As we have seen, the total length of the Guénégaud theatre building including the 25 pieds extension to the original jeu de paume added by Sourdéac and Champeron was between 139 and 151 pieds (148.2 and 161 ft., 45.2 and 49.1 m.). Of this, we have estimated the stage to occupy 51 pieds (54.4 ft., 16.6 m.). We can further estimate that the length of the auditorium would have been approximately 56 pieds (59.7 ft., 18.2 m.), containing on each side seven side boxes each 6 pieds wide, one clavicule and entrance passage also approximately 6 pieds wide, a row of rear boxes 6 pieds deep, and a rear entrance passage 2 pieds wide. This would leave between 32 and 44 pieds (34.1 and 46.9 ft., 10.4 and 14.3 m.) for backstage and front-of-house facilities.

The Guénégaud stage was probably raised approximately 6 pieds (6.4 ft., 1.95 m.) above the level of the parterre, since the stage at the Hôtel de Bourgogne was 1.92 m. (6.3 ft.) high,¹⁸⁵ that of the Marais

¹⁸⁴ In the marché between Denis Buret and Du Croisy of 24 November 1660 relating to work to be carried out in the Palais-Royal auditorium, it is stipulated that a stage floor should be constructed 'de huit toises et demie de largeur ou environ sur cinq toises de profondeur' (Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 354). This must be an instance of width and depth measurements being confused, since after the adaptation of the Palais-Royal by Vigarani for Lully, the stage measured 4 toises 4 pieds 11 pouces in width, and 8 toises 4 pieds 2 pouces in depth (Lagrange, Théâtre et public, p. 83).

¹⁸⁵ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Mise-en-scène, p. 15.

1.95 m. (6.4 ft.) high,¹⁸⁶ and Molière's at the Palais-Royal 6 pieds (6.4 ft., 1.95 m.) high.¹⁸⁷

One feature of the extension Sourdéac and Champeron made to the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille is specifically mentioned in the lease of 8 October 1670. These are the 'travées' of which they were to be allowed to erect as many as might be necessary for their purposes.¹⁸⁸ These 'travées' could either have been supports for the new roof, or else gantries spanning the stage from which the stage machinery was operated. Indeed, the 'travées' may even have fulfilled both functions, since in 1680, during their dispute with the troupe of Italian actors with whom they shared their theatre, the Guénégaud company claimed that 'lesdits Italiens ont fait mettre de grandes pièces de bois de 34 à 35 pieds de long en travers le théâtre avec un plancher dessus et comme lesdites pièces de bois sont posées sur les galeries des machines <elles> courb<aient> de près d'un pied et mena<çaient> de ruiner le comble où sont les machines'.¹⁸⁹ This, incidentally, confirms our estimate of the Guénégaud's stage width as being between 30 and 38 pieds.

There do, however, appear to have been two different types of gallery running across the above stage area at the Guénégaud, since a 'Transaction' of 18 February 1680 states that those damaged by the Italians were 'faites seulement pour le passage des décorateurs';¹⁹⁰ and a 'Sentence' of the same date makes the distinction still more explicit. This instructs that the Italian troupe should be allowed to construct a temporary platform above the stage, but that it should be removed after

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁸⁷ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 355.

¹⁸⁸ Pougin, Créateurs, p. 299.

¹⁸⁹ Transaction (1 January 1680), Dossier Les Italiens.

¹⁹⁰ Transaction (18 February 1680), *ibid.*

each of their performances, with the further proviso that they should 'ni rien adosser ni appuyer soit contre la charpente qui sert auxdits machines soit au-dessus desdits machines à la charpente qui soutient la comble'.¹⁹¹

The question remains of whether the Guénégaud theatre was equipped with an upper stage level. Such secondary stages were features of both the Hôtel de Bourgogne and Marais theatres, where their use was particularly associated with the production of machine plays. The typical functioning of such a secondary stage is described with great clarity in the stage direction to the prologue of De Visé's Les Amours de Vénus et d'Adonis, performed at the Marais in 1670-1:

Tout le théâtre représente un ciel, et rien ne s'offre à la vue, que des amas de nuages. Une gloire paraît dans le fond, et le haut représente des nuées différentes de celles du bas. Les Grâces paraissent dans ce globe, accompagnées de l'Amour assis sur un amas de nuages duquel il part aussitôt, et traversant toute la salle, il va jusqu'au-dessus de l'amphithéâtre; d'où étant rappelé par les Grâces, il retourne, et s'arrête au devant du théâtre pour faire le prologue avec elles; puis il se va perdre dans le fond de la salle. Le ciel se referme, et le théâtre change, et représente les bois d'Italie.¹⁹²

Thus, the upper stage level was used for the appearance of such scenic devices as palaces of the gods - large constructions known as 'gloires' or 'globes' which often supported several actors. It would have been extremely difficult to suspend and move these using a counterbalance system, whereas it was comparatively simple to locate them on an upper stage and then reveal them by opening a sky shutter positioned across the front of this stage, masking it until required.

¹⁹¹ Sentence (18 February 1680), *ibid.*

¹⁹² Jean Donneau De Visé, Les Amours de Vénus et d'Adonis, tragédie (Paris, 1670), n.p. An earlier example of the use of such an upper stage level is given by John Golder ('Théâtre du Marais', pp. 142-4).

Deierkauf-Holsboer has shown that both the Hôtel de Bourgogne and Marais theatres possessed such upper stage levels.¹⁹³ More recently, Christian Delmas has suggested that Molière's theatre in the Palais-Royal might also have been equipped with a secondary stage, supported by 'la poutre' mentioned in the contract for the décors to be built for Dom Juan. He claims that it was here that La Nuit appeared in her chariot in the prologue to Molière's Amphitryon, as well as Jupiter on his cloud in the last act of the same play.¹⁹⁴ The evidence, however, is slight, and such apparitions occur so infrequently in Molière's plays, or on so small a scale as to make an upper stage seem unnecessary.

As for the Guénégaud, we have already seen that it was designed specifically for the presentation of spectacular operatic productions of the type which frequently necessitated the use of an upper stage level. Nevertheless, the first opera presented there, Perrin and Cambert's Pomone, does not seem to have required such a secondary stage, with all scene changes apparently taking place on the main stage. Gabriel Gilbert's Les Peines et les plaisirs de l'amour, however, requires that in the prologue 'Venus paraît dans un char tiré par des colombes, avec la Renommée et deux petits amours'. A still more elaborate scenic effect is called for in Act V: 'on prépare à Climène un palais magnifique. Avec la musique. Le théâtre se change et le palais paraît.' A ballet of satyrs, shepherds and shepherdesses follows, after which 'le ciel de Vénus paraît', 'une forme de trône descend du ciel où sont deux petits amours.... Apollon et Climène montent sur le trône de l'Amour et sont

¹⁹³ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, I, 13; Marais, I, 108.

¹⁹⁴ Delmas, 'Dom Juan', p. 63.

élevés dans le ciel'.¹⁹⁵ This is precisely the type of scenic effect which would have been difficult without a secondary stage.

During the first season of the combined troupe's occupation of the Guénégaud, no play was presented there which required the use of an upper stage, with the possible exception of Amphitryon. A secondary stage was, however, employed for at least one production given during the 1674-5 season: Thomas Corneille's machine play Circé. On 3 February 1675, during preparations for the play, the payment of 1 livre was recorded in the company's Registre, 'pour une journée au Breton pour avoir aidé à monter les châssis du globe sur le plafond' (R II, 128). The use of the word 'globe' in this context is significant, as, indeed, is the positioning of the flats, since in the public theatre of the time, scene changes were most usually effected by sliding flats on and off stage in grooves running along the stage floor, rather than by flying them in from above as is the current practice. Thus, flats raised to an upper level would almost certainly have been used to decorate that level.

A considerable amount of wood was used in the construction of the décors for Circé, and this could be interpreted as indicating that a secondary stage was constructed specifically for the production of this work. Indeed, in certain contexts, the term 'globe' would almost seem to be synonymous with this upper level, as in the following extract from the Registre:

La troupe a dépensé pour la préparation de Circé depuis qu'on a commencé à faire travailler au théâtre tant en journées d'ouvriers que fournitures et marchandises de bois, clous, cordages, chandelle et autres choses depuis le 29^e avril 1674, jusques au 17^e juillet pour la première fois, pendant lequel temps on a travaillé au globe. Et depuis le

¹⁹⁵ Gabriel Gilbert, Opéra pastorale héroïque des peines et des plaisirs de l'amour (Paris, 1672), n.p.

7^e octobre de ladite année jusques au 26^e février 1675 ce qui en suit suivant le présent registre.... (R II, 145 v^o)

The sums which follow include:

Bois pour le globe:

29 ^e avril 1674	14 l. 17 s.
1 ^{er} mai 1674	10 l.
4 ^e mai 1674	6 l.
29 ^e mai 1674	52 l.
1 ^{er} juin 1674	3 l. 17 s.
	<hr/>
	86 l. 4 s. (R II, 145 v ^o)

However, the first time the production of Circé is mentioned in the Guénégaud Registres is on 7 October 1674, on which date it is entered: 'L'on n'a point joué à cause des désordres que M. Dauvilliers et Mlle Dupin ont incités dans la troupe au sujet de la pièce de Circé' (R II, 77). And, according to La Grange in his Registre, it was not until 23 October 1674 that the company undertook 'la dépense des machines de Circé et en continuant jusqu'à la première représentation' (I, 165). It would seem, therefore, that the expenditure on 'bois pour le globe' of April, May and June 1674 was for the construction of an upper stage level. The fact that this was begun at the start of the 1674-5 season, five months before preparations for Circé began, can be interpreted in two ways: either it was decided to equip the Guénégaud with a second stage independently of preparations for a specific production, in readiness for any machine plays which might be given in the future, or else work on Circé began much earlier than hitherto believed, but was suspended for some unknown reason. Of these, the former hypothesis would appear the most likely. In either case it would seem clear that if a second stage had been in existence at the time of the production of Les Peines et les plaisirs de l'amour, it had subsequently been removed.

The term 'globe' is used only twice in the text of the play Circé, both times referring to the palace of Venus which appears in Act III,

scene 8, and which is described in the following terms in a stage direction:

Ici on voit descendre Vénus dans son palais, dont l'architecture est composée et ornée de quantité d'amours qui soutiennent la corniche.... Le piédestal se trouve directement dessous, orné de panneaux d'azur veiné d'or. De grands festons de fleurs tombent du milieu des frises, dans lesquelles d'espace en espace sont peints des coeurs percés de flèches, avec des carquois et d'autres ornements. L'optique représente deux amours de même symétrie que les autres, avec un berceau soutenu par quatre amours en forme de termes qui le supportent. Il est fait de feuillages et de jasmins, au milieu desquels on voit une table de marbre blanc, remplie de corbeilles de fleurs et de vases.¹⁹⁶

The following scene includes a stage direction referring to 'Vénus sur le globe environné d'amours', and ends when 'les amours s'envolent de tous côtés, et Vénus remonte dans son globe' (III, 9). Given the elaborate structure of the palace of Venus and the number of actors it would have had to support, it is highly likely that it was presented on an upper stage level. The second stage would similarly have been used in Circé for the apparition of the palace of the Sun in Act IV, scene 5, and of the palace of Jupiter in Act V, scene 10. Indeed, such elaborate use was made of the above stage area in Circé, that the Guénégaud company were forced to employ ten men to carry out scene changes in this area of the theatre alone. Thus the frais ordinaires for Circé include '10 charpentiers pour le haut à 40^s', in addition to the ten 'menuisiers à 40^s', twenty-two 'manoeuvres à 20^s' and four 'crocheteurs à 30^s' also employed on the production (R II, pp. 139 ff.).¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁶ Thomas Corneille, Circé, tragédie ornée de machines, de changements de théâtre, et de musique (Paris, 1675), n.p.

¹⁹⁷ The pagination in this account book is interrupted at this point, three supplementary pages having been inserted after p. 139. The next numbered page is p. 140, giving details of the performance of Circé on 19 March 1675.

The upper stage at the Guénégaud theatre may well have been maintained for the next machine play presented there, Thomas Corneille's L'Inconnu. If so, it would appear to have been used in a rather different way, for L'Inconnu does not require the appearance of gods and goddesses in their palaces. The décor of its prologue, however, may have been represented by means of a secondary stage:

La décoration est une montagne toute de rochers, aux côtés de laquelle on découvre plusieurs arbres, avec cette différence, que les montagnes qui ont été vues jusqu'ici au théâtre sont d'une peinture plate qui représente le relief, et que celle-ci est un relief effectif.

....
On voit ... la montagne se remuer; elle est en un moment couverte d'arbres, et il s'en détache des pierres qui sont changées en hommes: ces hommes touchent d'autres pierres, et elles deviennent des violons entre leurs mains; ils en jouent un air....

En même temps on voit deux morceaux de rocher se changer en une nymphe et un berger; ils s'avancent et chantent....

Les arbres qui ont paru sur la montagne, s'en séparent et forment successivement des buissons, des allées, et des berceaux.¹⁹⁸

An upper stage level may also have been used to assist in the presentation of the elaborate 'berceau' required in Act II, scene 6 of L'Inconnu, although it is difficult to determine from the text whether the deities described would have been represented by actors or merely painted onto a two dimensional 'optique':

Il <Comus> fait signe à des paysans qui s'avancent, et qui forment un berceau composée de dix figures isolées en forme de termes de bronze doré, cinq de chaque côté, l'une d'homme et l'autre de femme, tenant chacune en l'une de leurs mains un bassin de porcelaine rempli de toute sorte de fruits en pyramide. Ces figures depuis la ceinture se terminent en gaines, et ces gaines sont environnées de pampres de vigne chargés de raisins. Chaque figure est portée sur son piédestal de marbre d'orient, où il y a de petites consoles dans les saillies qui soutiennent des porcelaines de différentes manières, remplies de pyramides de fruits aussi

¹⁹⁸ Thomas Corneille, L'Inconnu, comédie mêlée d'ornements et de musique (Paris, 1675).

beaux que les autres. Du milieu de ces consoles pendent des festons de fleurs. Toutes les figures de ce berceau portent sur leurs têtes de grands vases de porcelaine qu'elles soutiennent d'une main, et qui sont remplis en confusion de fleurs naturelles. Les cintres naissent de ces fleurs, et forment des figures cintrées de différentes manières de verdure coupées, d'où pendent des festons de fleurs et de toile d'or. L'optique de ce berceau où devrait être un buffet, est d'une manière toute extraordinaire. On y voit plusieurs degrés de gazon, et sur le plus élevé paraît un Bacchus tenant d'une main un vase d'or, et de l'autre une coupe. Il est environné de plusieurs vases d'or et d'argent. La déesse des fruits est à son aile droite, et à sa gauche Cérès tient dans une corbeille ce qui est de son ministère. Flore est un peu plus bas. On voit à ses côtés de grandes corbeilles de fleurs; et, comme elle en tient encore beaucoup, on connaît qu'elle en couvre tout le gazon qui l'environne, ce qui se remarque par celles qui sont déjà sur ce gazon. Au-dessous de Flore, on voit l'Abondance avec deux cornets qu'elle vide dans deux corbeilles que tiennent deux satyres qui sont sur un degré plus bas, et à demi courbés, et en posture de gens qui reçoivent. Entre toutes ces figures paraissent Pan et Sylvain accompagnés d'Orphée qui tient son luth, et les deux autres des flutes. Le tout est fini par un degré de gazon, aux deux bouts duquel il y a deux scabelons fort riches, et portant chacun un grand vase d'or; de sorte que sans avoir dressé un buffet de la manière ordinaire, on en voit paraître un beaucoup plus beau, auquel il ne manque rien, puisque Bacchus et Cérès y apportent ce qu'on peut attendre d'eux, et que Flore elle-même prend soin de le venir orner.

It is in Act V, scene 4 of L'Inconnu, however, that an upper stage, albeit a very low one, is most obviously required, when certain characters are treated to a play within the play:

Ils prennent tous place, et ils ne sont pas plutôt assis qu'on fait rouler vers eux un théâtre dont le devant est orné d'un fort beau tapis où pend une très-riche ~~campanne~~. Ce théâtre représente une chambre. Au-devant des deux premiers pilastres qui sont de chaque côté, il y a deux guéridons faits en Mores, portant chacun une girandole. Au-dessus de la corniche de ces pilastres qui sont enrichis, on voit deux corbeilles de fleurs. La frise qui règne sur la façade, représente deux grandes consoles d'or, avec des festons de fleurs qui ceignent le fronton; et entre les deux consoles il y a un rond orné d'une bordure dorée, dans lequel on voit une médaille. La suite de la chambre est enrichie d'arcades, de pilastres, de panneaux remplis d'ornements différents, de coloris, de festons de fleurs, de porcelaines, de vases d'or, d'argent et de lapis, et d'ovales percés à jour. Dans cinq arcades ou niches, qui sont d'azur rehaussé d'or, on voit cinq statues toutes d'or, représentant des amours; et dans le fond de la chambre il y

Le

a encore deux guéridons comme les premiers, garnis pareillement de girandoles. De fort riches ornements en embellissent le plafond; et il est percé en cinq endroits, d'où sortent cinq lustres. Plusieurs esclaves magnifiquement vêtus, marchent au-devant ^{Le} théâtre, et semblent le conduire quand il s'avance.

The record in the Registres on 15 October 1675 of a payment of three livres to M. Barbier 'pour des crochets pour les chandeliers du globe' (R III, 79), almost certainly refers to the decoration of this secondary stage. This is particularly interesting in that once again we find the term 'globe' being used as a synonym for an upper stage level, even when the more usual supernatural element is not involved.

An upper stage would also appear to have been required for Thomas Corneille's third machine play Le Triomphe des dames, the décor for Act V of which called for:

... dans le fond du théâtre un grand dais en forme de pavillon, sous lequel les juges du combat doivent venir prendre leur place. Il est de couleur de pourpre, retroussé par six amours, et garni de franges, houpes, et campanes d'or. On monte sous ce magnifique dais par deux grands escaliers, dont les rampes sont ornées de balustrades avec des soleils d'or. Une autre balustrade faite de la même manière, paraît au milieu; elle est supportée par deux figures d'or, dont cette décoration est si remplie.... Le reste de la décoration est composé de plusieurs pilastres de lapis veiné d'or, desquels pilastres les chapiteaux et les bases sont d'or, aussi bien que les trophées d'armes qui sont sur une balustrade qui règne au-dessus en forme d'attique. Seize piédestaux sortent en saillie, sur lesquels on voit autant de figures d'or portant des flambeaux, dont la lumière ne contribue pas peu à faire paraître tout ce que ce théâtre a de brillant.¹⁹⁹

It is interesting to note the use of the word 'théâtre' to describe this upper level, as well as the description of the devices used to light it. Again, it was called upon to support several actors, namely three ladies disguised as Juno, Pallas and Venus who are to be the judges of the

¹⁹⁹ Thomas Corneille, Le Triomphe des dames, comédie mêlée d'ornements avec l'explication du combat à la barrière, et de toutes les devises (Paris, 1676), pp. 27-8.

tournament on the first row, with above them the Baron who has organized the event and two other ladies, and below them the Herald who will announce the combat~~y~~ants (pp. 28-32).

Thomas Corneille's fourth work for the Guénégaud in this genre, La Devineresse, does not appear to have required a secondary stage, and nor do the majority of the other plays presented by the company.²⁰⁰ He again exploited the spectacular possibilities of the upper stage, however, in his final machine play, La Pierre philosopale, produced at the Guénégaud in 1681, shortly after the founding there of the Comédie-Française. In Act III of this work, the hero M. Maugis is persuaded that he is about to be received into the mystical order of Rosicrucians:

... un gnome et un gnomide se montrent à côté de lui, et lui donnent chacun une main. Il est reçu dans le jardin élevé, par un salamandre et par un sylph, l'un habitant du feu, et l'autre de l'air. Ils le mettent sur un siège de gazon au milieu de ce jardin. Le siège se lève, et élève M. Maugis dans le même temps.²⁰¹

He is told that he is about to be transported to visit the grotto containing the tomb of the founder of the order, upon which, 'On le voit sortir par le bout de ce jardin élevé, et l'on aperçoit presque aussitôt dans cette grotte, qui est une espèce de caverne, qui paraît au-dessous du jardin' (p. 19). It would seem, therefore, that, not content with using the two levels usual in a machine play, Thomas was here introducing a third. Moreover, Act IV of La Pierre philosopale calls for the appearance of a machine 'de la grandeur d'un Mont Parnasse', constructed on four levels and with representative elemental spirits

²⁰⁰ Exceptions might be Molière's Amphitryon as already considered, and Montauban's Les Charmes de Félicie, performed by the Guénégaud company in 1677-8, and which includes in Act V, scene 4 the apparition of the goddess Diana (Pousset de Montauban, Les Charmes de Félicie (Paris, 1659).

²⁰¹ Thomas Corneille, La Pierre philosopale, comédie mêlée de spectacles (Paris, 1681), pp. 18-9.

seated on each (p. 24). There is little doubt that to create these effect, an upper stage would have been used.

Spectacular effects were also made possible by the presence of trap-doors and other openings in the Guénégaud's stage floor. The most obvious instance of their use occurs in Thomas Corneille's Le Festin de pierre, a verse adaptation of Molière's Dom Juan, performed by the Guénégaud company for the first time as part of their 1676-7 season. The penultimate scene of this work contains the stage direction: 'La statue embrasse Dom Juan, et un moment après tous les deux sont abîmés'.²⁰² The 1682 'non cartonné' edition of Molière's play gives rather more details of what would actually have occurred on stage: 'Le tonnerre tombe avec un grand bruit et de grands éclairs sur Dom Juan; la terre s'ouvre et l'abîme; et il sort de grands feux de l'endroit où il est tombé'.²⁰³ An article in Le Magasin pittoresque of 1867, taking as its departure point certain diagrams of seventeenth-century theatre mechanisms, describes how such flames could be made to appear:

La flamme ... est un carton irrégulièrement découpé, peint par devant des couleurs convenables..., soutenu par derrière d'un cadre de bois qu'on appelle un bâti. Ce bâti, avec son carton ... est sur la scène. Il est venu ... par le trappillon. On nomme trappillons les fentes qui coupent ... le plancher du théâtre, parallèlement entre elles et d'un côté de la scène à l'autre. Quant au moyen dont on s'est servi pour élever le bâti par le trappillon et le faire apparaître rapidement devant le spectateur, il consiste ... en ficelles s'enroulant sur des cylindres ou glissant sur des poulies.²⁰⁴

²⁰² Le Festin de pierre, comédie en 5 actes de Molière, mise en vers par Thomas Corneille (1677) (Paris, 1826), (V,5).

²⁰³ Molière, Oeuvres complètes, p. 1319.

²⁰⁴ 'Mécaniques et machines de théâtre', Le Magasin pittoresque (1867), pp. 286-381, in Francis Bondino, 'Présentation des pièces à machines au XVII^e siècle: mise en scène, décors, costumes', unpublished dissertation, Université de Paris X, 1972 (pp. 27-8).

We know that the Guénégaud theatre was equipped with trap-doors in its stage floor because one of the features of the company's dispute with the Italian troupe was that they attempted to prevent the Italians from using the traps which already existed, while not allowing them to construct any of their own, thereby putting one particular type of scenic effect completely out of their reach. They were, however, only partially successful; for the 'Sentence' of 18 February 1680, maintaining that of 20 January, decreed that the Italians should be allowed to use those traps and openings which already existed, but that they could not make any new ones without the prior consent of the French troupe.²⁰⁵

Unfortunately, not all holes in the Guénégaud's stage floor were those required for production purposes, and the Registres contain several references to repair work carried out in this area. On 7 February 1677 Crosnier and Le Breton were each paid 15 sols 'pour avoir travaillé au théâtre' (R IV, 121), on 30 December 1678 18 livres were spent on 'des ais de sapin pour boucher le théâtre' (R V, 127), and on 21 March 1679 there was again a payment of 18 livres 'à Laurens menuisier pour avoir fermé les ouvertures du théâtre et avoir accommodé la loge de M. Verneuil' (R V, 162).

As well as housing mechanisms necessary for the operation of stage machinery, the area below the stage at the Guénégaud, including the 6 pieds (6.4 ft., 1.95 m.) height of the actual stage and the 25 pieds (26.6 ft., 8.1 m.) excavated by Sourdéac and Champeron, was also used to provide storage space. In 1679, the Italian company complained to the King, 'qu'ils n'ⁱont pas d'endroit pour serrer leurs décorations et qu'ils soient obligés de louer pour cela des lieux particuliers'. The 'Transaction' of 18 February 1680 gives some idea of the conditions

²⁰⁵ Dossier les Italiens.

which existed in the below stage area. The Italians were forbidden to put any prop or accessory 'à l'endroit où est posé l'enfer', they were, however, permitted to place:

... machines et décorations qu'ils trouveront à propos dans l'aire dudit théâtre jusques à la première des deux planchers qui sont en-deça de la mer (sans pouvoir néanmoins faire aucune ouverture depuis le berceau de Circé jusques auxdits deux planchers ni toucher à aucun des mouvements qui sont en cet endroit dessous le théâtre, le tout au-dessous des galeries qui conduisent aux machines desdits sieurs français, et adosser pour cet effet contre les murs tout ce qui sera nécessaire en toute sorte....²⁰⁶

The area below the stage at the Guénégaud must have been considerable, especially when we consider that the two houses adjoining the Jeu de Paume de la Bouteille leased by Sourdéac and Champeron would also have possessed cellars. This is confirmed by a reference to cellars in the plural to be found in the Registres when, on 13 February 1678, a payment of 12 sols was made 'à Crosnier l'aîné pour avoir vidé les caves' (R V, 120). Even so, the storage space was not sufficient when a 'pièce à grand spectacle' was being prepared, for on 22 January 1675 the company paid 15 livres 12 sols 'à la femme qui garde les décorations de Circé' (R II, 123).

One interesting feature of the Guénégaud stage was that it was equipped with footlights. On 9 May and 5 September 1677 sums were paid to the 'faiseur de fer blanc' for 'bobèches' (R V, 3, 52); and on 5 May 1679, their use is specified more clearly: 'pour les bobèches de fer blanc de la rampe du théâtre, 7 livres 10 sols' (R V, 11). No mention of this aspect of theatre lighting is made by Deierkauf-Holsboer in her Histoire de la mise-en-scène, and we do not know whether a similar system was employed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne and Marais theatres. Frontispieces to plays illustrating scenes presented provide unreliable

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

evidence in this matter, since very often footlights were omitted by the artist so as to reveal more of the acting area.²⁰⁷ They are, however, shown in the painting 'Farceurs français et italiens' attributed to Verio and dated to 1670. Footlights were apparently regularly used for the performance of opera, for Gaston Baty and René Chavancé write in their Vie de l'art théâtral: 'on est obligé de noter que l'Académie royale de musique ne connaît pour toute rampe qu'une suite de lampions à huit mèches trempant dans l'huile de pied de boeuf et répandant une odeur et une fumée sans agrément'.²⁰⁸ Jérôme de La Gorce gives further details of the footlights at the Académie Royale de Musique, saying that they were fifty in number and that they took the form of zinc boxes with five wicks floating in each. He also claims that quite sophisticated lighting effects were possible there, with lamps sometimes being placed behind décors painted on fine cloth to give a luminous effect, and with the use of candles and oil lamps being varied to create different shades of light, thus belying Baty and Chavancé's assertions as to the primitive nature of the Opera's stage lighting.²⁰⁹ It would appear, however, that the Guénégaud was entirely lit by candle power, since there is no record in the Registres of sums spent on oil for lighting.

²⁰⁷ According to Pierre Sonrel (Traité de scénographie (Paris, 1943, p. 59), Molière used footlights at the Palais-Royal, for, discussing the 1664 frontispiece to L'Ecole des femmes, he writes: 'la rampe est indiquée par l'opposition lumineuse entre les premiers plans du plateau qu'elle éclaire et l'écran qui la cache (décoré ici en frontispiece).' He is referring to the 1661 Chauveau engraving. Since none of the contemporary frontispieces to Molière's plays first performed at the Palais-Royal actually show the presence of footlights, Sonrel's theory would seem to be based on little real evidence.

²⁰⁸ Gaston Baty and René Chavancé, Vie de l'art théâtral des origines à nos jours (Paris, 1932), pp. 159-60.

²⁰⁹ Jérôme de La Gorce, L'Opéra sous le règne de Louis XIV: le merveilleux ou les puissances surnaturelles (1671-1715) (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Collège de France, 1978), p. 103. See also, Gösta M. Bergman, Lighting in the Theatre (Uppsala, 1977), pp. 122-51.

There are, nevertheless, occasional references to lampes. These were probably used elsewhere in the theatre other than on the stage.

We have already seen that the remaining members of Molière's troupe brought with them from the Palais Royal the ten crystal chandeliers that had been in their possession there, and that only eight of these were ever used at the Guénégaud. This is known because the Italian troupe did not have any chandeliers of their own, and so were forced to hire those belonging to the French company at a rate of three livres per performance. A loose leaf enclosed in the 1674-5 Registre enumerating 'des sommes de deniers appartenant à la troupe des Comédiens du Roi qui sont mises journellement entre les mains de M. de La Grange pour payer le loyer de leur hôtel', includes the following reference: 'les Italiens n'ayant point de chandeliers de cristal ont payé pour le louage des huit qui sont au théâtre trois livres'.

Five of these chandeliers can be seen in the Le Pautre engraving of the Alexandre painting. They are suspended in two rows towards the front of the stage, but the curved form of the engraving makes it impossible to see how they are attached.²¹⁰ Six are visible in the later version by Bonnart, together with the stage ceiling from which they are apparently suspended on single cords.²¹¹ As we saw when considering the Act V, scene 4 décor of L'Inconnu, it was quite usual for holes to be made in a ceiling cloth so that the cords supporting the chandeliers could be passed through.

These chandeliers were evidently very fragile, for sums were constantly being spent on their repair, as on 2 November 1674 and 23 April 1675 (R II, 88; III, 1). Finally, in late 1676 or early 1677, new ones were constructed, for we find payments of 10 livres 4 sols 'pour

²¹⁰ Heuzey, 'Du costume', p. 25.

²¹¹ Brockett, History, p. 272.

? six mauds de fil pour les chandeliers' (24 July 1676); 150 livres 'au nommé Le Guain fondeur sur les chandeliers de cristal' (6 December 1676 v°); and 66 livres 'à Mme Ezouard pour des chandeliers de cristal' (18 December 1676 v°) (R IV, 41, 97 v°, 101 v°). The total cost of these new chandeliers was some 2,000 livres, for on 14 February 1677, Hubert reported back to the company 'de la recette qu'il a fait de la somme de 1,000 livres des Comédiens Italiens pour leur moitié des huit lustres que la compagnie a fait faire.' Amounts paid out included 478 livres 10 sols 'au sieur Poisle marchand pour les grains de cristal', and 403 livres 10 sols 'à Mme Ezouard, plus pour la façon 72 livres' (R IV, 123 v°).

The new chandeliers appear to have been no more robust than those they replaced, for only a few months later, in May 1677, a total of 10 livres 2 sols was paid to the fondeur for repairs (R V, 8-10), and a further 1 livre 10 sols on 20 August 1679 (R VII, 54). On 18 June 1677 a woman was paid 15 livres for the French troupe's share of repair (R V, 19), a new cord was bought for them on 18 September 1678 (R VI, 31), and on 20 June 1679 Mme Ezouard was paid 17 livres 'pour avoir raccommo^dé les lustres' (R VII, 29). It was also Mme Ezouard who was responsible for cleaning them, and she was paid 30 livres for doing so on 1 July 1678 (R VI, 76).

According to Chappuzeau in Le Théâtre français, it was one of the duties of a theatre's two décorateurs to snuff guttering candles and trim wicks during the course of a performance, unless they hired other employees to do this for them (p. 147). 'Mouchettes' were bought by the Guénégaud company for this purpose on 2 December 1674 (R II, 102). One of the perquisites of the décorateurs' job was that they were allowed to sell back to the candle-maker any remaining stumps of candles. At the Guénégaud, however, this privilege was enjoyed not by the two

décorateurs, but by the two machinistes, Sourdéac and Champeron, as is shown by the following entry in the Registres: 'Compté avec Mme Mécard le samedi 21^e août 1677 de toute la chandelle qu'elle avait retournée de MM. de Sourdéac et Champeron et autres de l'année 1676 montant à quatre-vingt-six livres de chandelle qui font la somme de trente six livres deux sols ... (R V, 45). Curiously, it would seem that chandeliers were not normally lowered in order for this snuffing to be carried out, since in December 1674 a special payment was made 'pour avoir abaissé les lustres deux fois' (R II, 112 v^o).

In addition to the eight chandeliers which, together with the footlights, provided the main elements of lighting for the stage area, others appear to have been bought or hired depending on the requirements of particular plays. Thus, on 22 September 1673 an unknown number of 'chandeliers d'étain' were bought for 3 livres (R I, 30); on 18 January 1675 9 livres were paid 'pour des linges pour couvrir les lustres de Circé' (R II, 121); and for L'Inconnu, as we have seen, 3 livres were paid to 'M. Barbier pour des crochets pour les chandeliers du globe', nine chandeliers of gilded wood were purchased at 6 livres each (22 November 1675 v^o), and 7 livres 10 sols were paid 'pour le louage des lustres qui ont servi à la première et seconde représentation' (26 November 1675 v^o) (R III, 79, 95 v^o, 97 v^o). These would all have been used to illuminate or at least decorate the various gloires, globes or upper stage levels required by these two plays.

Other lighting devices employed at the Guénégaud were 'plaques', to which there are numerous references throughout the Registres. These were small metal candle-holders or sconces which were attached to walls or beams and used to light the auditorium. According to Deierkauf-Holsboer, the Marais company possessed in 1653: 'quatre chandeliers de cristal et deux petits semblables, plus ... bras dorés, plus ... plaques

de fer blanc servant à mettre le long des galeries des loges et dans le parterre'.²¹² This illumination of the auditorium would have been necessary, despite the fact that performances were given during daylight hours, because the gaps between the tops of the side walls and the roof present in jeux de paume in their original form would almost certainly have been closed up during their conversion into theatres so as to make them more weatherproof. They were not, however, necessarily filled in with solid panels, for a vitrier was paid 5 livres 12 sols on 19 September 1673 for eight 'carreaux', 2 livres 16 sols on 20 November 1674 for having repaired the windows in M. d'Estriché's ~~ap~~artment, 1 livre 4 sols on 23 February 1676 for more repairs, and 2 livres 8 sols on 30 May 1679 'pour douze carreaux de verre' (R I, 28; II, 97; III, 133; VII, 21). That such windows were also to be found in the auditorium is shown by a payment of 4 livres 5 sols on 10 October 1679 'au vitrier qui a fait les châssis de la salle de théâtre' (R VII, 98).²¹³ These windows would have been hung with natte, for a nattier's mémoire includes 'six nattes pour mettre devant des fenêtres' (R II, 114 v^o). Since, thanks to the glass, protection from the elements does not appear to have been a consideration, the purpose of this natte was no doubt to keep out as much natural light as possible so as to intensify the theatrical illusion. This in marked contrast to the early years of the

²¹² Deierkauf-Holsboer, Mise-en-scène, p. 75. She is almost certainly mistaken, however, when she states that while the two small chandeliers were used to light the upper stage level, the four large ones hung above the raised amphithéâtre. It is far more likely that they were used to illuminate the forestage.

²¹³ In the 'Mémoire' of work to be carried out at the Marais in 1644, it is stated that there should be 'deux fenêtres pour donner jour, ... d'un pouce d'épais, et deux autres fenêtres aux deux côtés si besoin est' (Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, I, 197).

seventeenth century, when daylight seems to have been one of the chief forms of theatrical illumination.²¹⁴

The presence of footlights and chandeliers hung over the forestage, together with the use of perspective scenery for certain productions which meant that actors could not venture far upstage without destroying the perspective, would seem to indicate that most of the action took place in the extreme downstage area. This would have had the added advantage of enabling the actors to be heard more easily above the noise of the often rowdy parterre. Filippi, however, believes that, as the acoustics of jeu de paume type theatres were particularly good, such precautions would have been unnecessary:

Toutes les salles vides, carrées ou oblongues, et d'une hauteur proportionnée, sont sonores, c'est à dire prolongent la sensation du son....

Ce que nous venons de dire est prouvé par l'histoire même de la question. Tant que les théâtres ont été bâtis dans des salles préexistantes, presque toujours rectangles et oblongues, personne ne s'est occupé de la sonorité, parce qu'elle était parfaite....²¹⁵

So it might have been when the theatre was empty, but with a full parterre the actors probably needed and took every possible advantage.

One final detail relating to the stage at the Guénégaud theatre is that we know it to have possessed a curtain which went up at the beginning of each performance. Evidence is provided by two stage directions: the first from the prologue to Pomone where it is stated that 'La toile se lève, et l'on voit Vertumne et la Nympe de la Seine';²¹⁶ and the second from the prologue to Circé: 'La toile qui

²¹⁴ Bergman, Lighting, pp. 145-9.

²¹⁵ Joseph de Filippi, 'De la sonorité des salles de spectacle', Chronique musicale, 6 (1874), pp. 193-9 (p. 196).

²¹⁶ Pierre Perrin, Pomone, opéra ou représentation en musique pastorale (Paris, 1671).

cache le théâtre étant levée, laisse paraître un temple de riche architecture'. This curtain would have been used only once at the beginning of the performance, and would not have fallen between acts. The musicians who played during the intervals, therefore, had no visual cue as to when to begin. This, as we have seen, led Chappuzeau to remark in Le Théâtre français: 'Il est bon qu'ils sachent par coeur les deux derniers vers de l'acte, pour reprendre promptement la symphonie sans attendre qu'on leur crie: 'Jouez!' ce qui arrive souvent (p. 147)'.

Francis Bondino is clearly mistaken, therefore, when he writes of Jacques Scherer's assertion²¹⁷ that the curtain was only used at the beginning of a performance: 'Cette opinion ne semble pas valable pour les pièces à machines. Les changements de décor, de plus en plus délicats, doivent sans aucun doute être cachés du public pour ménager la surprise.'²¹⁸ This is to ignore the many references to 'changements à vue' to be found in seventeenth-century machine plays, as well as to misunderstand the attitude of the audience towards them. As we will see, the rôle of the supernatural was of extreme importance in such plays, with gods and magicians using their powers to bring about the various scenic effects required. And, as Scherer notes, such effects were 'd'autant plus goûté(s) que la croyance à la magie était à peu près générale'.²¹⁹ Since the scene changes which occurred within a play were frequently supposedly brought about by the force of magic - a triumph of the supernatural over reality - how much greater would be the dramatic effect if illusion were seen to triumph over the theatrical reality with the décor metamorphosing before the audience's eyes. Such an effect

²¹⁷ Scherer, Dramaturgie classique, p. 174.

²¹⁸ Présentation, p. 22.

²¹⁹ Scherer, Dramaturgie classique, p. 164. Interestingly, this is an aspect of the machine play Thomas Corneille was subvert in his development of the genre.

would be negated by the use of a curtain, which serves to concentrate the mind on the very activity it is designed to conceal: that of the stagehand whose handiwork is revealed as the curtain goes up. This is not to say, however, that all the mechanisms of the theatrical production were visible to the audience. That, too, would have been to destroy the dramatic illusion. Rather, the area above the stage from which the machines were operated was masked from the audience's sight by a screen made of 'natte' or woven rush matting. Evidence to this effect is provided by a mémoire submitted to the company by the nattier requesting payment for, among other items, 'une cloison au-dessus du théâtre' (R II, 114 v°).

BACKSTAGE

In Le Théâtre français, Chappuzeau describes the immediate backstage area or wings of a seventeenth-century French theatre where the actors would await their entrances, as well as their behaviour while doing so: 'Durant la comédie ils observent un grand silence pour ne pas troubler l'acteur qui parle, et se tiennent sur des sièges aux ailes du théâtre pour entrer juste; en quoi ils se peuvent régler sur un papier attaché à la toile, qui marque les entrées et les sorties' (p. 113).

Certain actors had their own dressing-room or 'loge' in which to prepare for the performance, and where, again according to Chappuzeau, '<ils> ne trouvent pas mauvais qu'on vienne alors les voir, surtout quand ce sont des gens connus, dont la présence n'embarrasse point' (p. 113). That strangers did occasionally visit actors in their dressing rooms, however, is illustrated by an incident which occurred in 1675 and which is described in the pamphlet attacking Mlle Molière entitled La Fameuse Comédienne.²²⁰ In that year a certain Président Lescot from

²²⁰ La Fameuse Comédienne ou Histoire de la Guérin auparavant femme et veuve de Molière, edited by Jules Bonnassies (Paris, 1870).

Grenoble, having seen Mlle Molière perform, became enamoured of her and sol~~x~~icited an introduction. A woman of somewhat dubious virtue named Ledoux said that she would arrange a meeting. She was not, however, acquainted with Mlle Molière, but did know a certain Mme Tourelle who resembled her closely. Lescot met and was deceived by La Tourelle, 'qui vint avec un habit fort négligé, comme une personne qui appréhendait d'être connue. Elle affecta la toux éternelle de la Molière, ses airs importants, ne parlant que de vapeurs, et joua si bien son rôle, qu'un homme plus connoisseur y eût été trompé' (p. 47). He offered the woman a necklace as a present which she accepted.

Lescot went frequently to admire his supposed mistress in Circé, where Mlle Molière played the title rôle, and in which he found her particularly attractive: 'elle y avait un certain habit de magicienne et quantité de cheveux épars, qui lui donnaient un grand agrément' (p. 48). La Tourelle had, as a precaution, instructed Lescot not to speak to her at the theatre, saying that it would give away the secret of their relationship. Unfortunately, one day La Tourelle did not appear at a rendezvous, and Lescot went to the Guénégaud to see her. He sat on the stage, despite the fact that she had forbidden him to do so:

D'abord qu'il fut sur le théâtre, il ne put lui parler à cause d'un nombre infini de gens qui l'entouraient; il se contentait de lui sourire toutes les fois qu'elle tournait la tête de son côté, et de lui dire, quand elle passait dans une arle de décoration, où il s'était mis exprès: 'Vous n'avez jamais été si belle! Si je n'étais pas amoureux, je le deviendrais aujourd'hui. (p. 49)

Mlle Molière did not reply. Lescot, in despair, could not contain his impatience:

Dans l'envie qu'il avait de savoir sa destinée, il fut l'attendre à la porte de la loge où elle se déshabillait, et y entra avec elle, lorsque la comédie fut finie.

La Molière est fort impérieuse, et la liberté du Président lui parut trop grande pour un homme qu'elle

n'avait jamais vu. Ce n'est pas qu'il ne soit permis d'entrer dans les loges des comédiennes, mais il faut, du moins, que ce soient des gens qu'elles connaissent.... (pp. 49-50)

Mlle Molière called for her fellow actors to protect her. An unpleasant scene followed during which Lescot snatched a necklace from around the actress's neck: 'A cet affront, que la Demoiselle ne crut pas devoir supporter, elle fit monter tous les gardes de la comédie. On ferma les portes et on envoya quérir un commissaire, qui conduisit le Président en prison' (p. 54).

Lescot was released the following day on bail. Mlle Molière pressed for damages, and with some difficulty succeeded in proving her case. Lescot was sentenced on 17 September 1675 to pay costs and 200 livres in damages. Ledoux and Tourelle were sentenced to be whipped, once in front of the Châtelet and once in front of the Guénégaud theatre. La Tourelle, however, succeeded in escaping, so that, despite her appeal, La Ledoux was punished alone on 17 October 1675 (pp. xix-xx).

The account of this affair is interesting on several counts: firstly, for the description it gives of Mlle Molière and of certain of her characteristics, as well as for the account of her in the rôle of Circé; secondly, for the details relating to the seating of spectators on the stage and the practice of visiting actresses in their dressing rooms; and, finally, for the account of the action taken when someone caused a disturbance in the theatre. The affair was referred to in two plays written shortly afterwards: La Fausse Clélie ou l'Inconnue by M. N..., written in 1676 but never performed,²²¹ and, Thomas Corneille's L'Inconnu, premiered at the Guénégaud in November 1675. In the latter

²²¹ Maupoint, Bibliothèque des théâtres (Paris, 1733), p. 127.

work, a Bohémienne tells the fortune of La Comtesse played by Mlle Molière:

Sur des traits ressemblants on en parlera mal,
 Et vous aurez une copie
 Qui vous fera croire l'original
 D'un honneur ennemi de la cérémonie,
 N'en prenez pas trop de chagrin:
 Si votre gaillarde figure
 Contre vous quelquefois cause un fâcheux murmure,
 Un tour de ville y mettra fin,
 Et vous rirez de l'aventure.
 (III, 6)

The actors' dressing rooms were located at the sides of the stage. This is known because the Sentence of 18 February 1680 giving judgement in the Guénégaud company's dispute with the Italian actors stipulates that the latter troupe were not to be allowed to use the 'loges dans lesquelles ils s'habillent présentement et étant à côté dudit théâtre'.²²² They must have been extremely close to the stage area and its machinery, since the account books include a reference to the payment of 1 livre 'pour une porte que l'on a fait^e au contrepoids qui est au-dessus de la loge de M. Du Croisy' (R II, 111 v^o). In fact, the Registres contain numerous references to work carried out in the dressing rooms, including moving tables and chairs and other items of furniture, repairing locks and lighting fittings, and repairing and sweeping chimneys. In 1676, Mlle Guyot appears to have had a dressing room constructed from scratch by the menuisier De Flandres. This was paid for in three ~~installments~~, the cost totalling 17 livres 14 sols (R IV, 12-6). This could be seen to indicate that she had not had a dressing room before, and that some members of the company shared dressing-room space, with moving to a dressing-room of one's own being considered as a promotion. This is all the more likely in that the loges

²²² Dossier Les Italiens.

most frequently mentioned are those of Mlle Molière, La Grange, Hubert, Du Croisy and Guérin d'Estriché, the senior members of the company.

As well as having his own dressing-room, Guérin d'Estriché actually lived in an apartment in the theatre which he rented from the company. During the meeting to settle outstanding accounts at the end of the 1674-5 season, it was ^{noted} ~~reminded~~ that 'M. d'Estriché doit le loyer de ses chambres savoir un terme de 50 livres échu le dernier juin 1674 à raison de 90 livres par an' (R II, 146 v°). He was still residing there in 1676-7, for the Registre for that season includes the note: 'M. D'Estriché doit le loyer de son appartement de toute l'année à 90 livres par an' (R IV, 133). He would, no doubt, have moved out when he married Mlle Molière on 31 May 1677.²²³

Another member of the company to live on the theatre premises was Hubert. As his rent was higher than that of Guérin d'Estriché, his apartment would probably have been larger as befitted a married man. It is interesting that as ^S/₂ member of the Marais company, 1659-64, Hubert and his wife had also lived in that theatre.²²⁴ The 1676-7 Registre states that on 8 November 1676, 'M. Hubert a payé pour l'appartement qu'il occupe dans l'hôtel à raison de 75 livres pour une demie année' (R IV, 132). It continues, 'M. Hubert doit le loyer de son appartement depuis octobre 1676 jusqu'à la fin de mars 1677 à raison de 150 livres par an' (R IV, 133). Hubert was still occupying this apartment in the last season of the Guénégaud's existence, for an entry in the 1679-80 Registre records the receipt of '37 livres que M. Hubert devait du loyer de l'appartement qu'il occupe dans l'hôtel' (R VIII, 176 v°).

The Italian troupe refer to one of these apartments in their placet au Roi of 1679, where they complain that 'les comédiens français

²²³ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 197.

²²⁴ Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique, p. 113.

retirent seuls 700 livres de la limonadière et le louage d'un appartement sur le devant'.²²⁵ The location they give makes it appear that the apartment was situated in one of the two houses which abutted onto the original jeu de paume. These were described in the lease passed between Maximilien de Laffemas and Sourdéac and Champeron as being 'appliqué<e>s au rez de chaussée, à salles à cheminée, allée de passage et cuisine, écurie ou appentis, plusieurs étages au nombre de trois, chambres à cheminées et grenier au-dessus'.²²⁶ It would seem likely, therefore, that these houses were adapted so that the lower floors became part of the theatre, containing front-of-house and backstage facilities, while the upper floors were left as residential quarters. These would also possibly have contained the lodgings of M. Dufors, the theatre's concierge, and his wife.²²⁷

While not actually residing in the theatre, Mlle Molière herself lived extremely close by. On 16 August 1673, she, together with her sister Geneviève Béjart and brother-in-law Jean-Baptiste Aubry, rented the Hôtel d'Arras in the rue de Seine for six years at 1,200 livres per year.²²⁸ The lease to this building contained a clause giving Mlle Molière 'le droit d'ouvrir une porte sur la montée du corps de logis de derrière pour avoir communication au théâtre'.²²⁹ This arrangement, however, seems to have caused some concern regarding security, for the

²²⁵ Dossier Les Italiens.

²²⁶ Pougin Créateurs, p. 299.

²²⁷ Similarly, when the Comédie-Française was forced to find new premises in 1687, and subsequently bought the Jeu de Paume de l'Etoile in 1688, they also bought the two houses situated behind this building in the rue des Mauvais Garçons. It was here that 'les loges des acteurs et les bureaux administratifs y furent installés' (Bourdel, 'Etablissement', p. 169).

²²⁸ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 660.

²²⁹ Fameuse Comédienne, pp. xx-xxi.

1674-5 Registre states that it had been decided 'qu'il sera mis une serrure double à la porte du théâtre qui a communication à celle de Mlle Molière dont MM. de Sourdéac et de Champeron auront la clef pour la faire ouvrir aux jours de représentation et de répétition' (R II, 139 v^o). It would appear from the above that both the main entrance to the theatre and that of Mlle Molière's property gave onto the passage giving access to the jeu de paume.

If part of the ground-floors of the two adjacent houses was used to provide workshops for the two décorateurs and the army of carpenters and other workers who participated in the construction of décors, like the below-stage storage space these were not sufficient when a large-scale machine play was being prepared. For example, for Circé it was found necessary to construct a shed in which the menuisiers could work. A mémoire of March 1675 records the payment of 50 livres 'pour du bois acheté pour faire le hangar où travaillent les menuisiers' (R II, 139 v^o), and later in the month the total amount spent on the 'bois du hangar' was assessed at 150 livres (R II, 145 v^o). There is no way of knowing where this shed was situated, but it may have been in one of the two courtyards positioned on either side of the jeu de paume. The following season, even this additional workshop seems to have proved inadequate, for on 13 September 1676, 22 livres were paid 'pour demie année achevée au 20^e mai dernier du loyer de l'hangar à M. Le Moyne', and this hangar was retained at least until November, for on 29 November 1676 22 livres were paid for a further six months (R IV, 60, 94 v^o). For the production of Circé the Guénégaud company also hired a worksite from a 'fournisseur de fer' named Mareschal; for on 11 June 1675 they paid 11 livres 'pour le terme échu à Pâques' (R III, 21). In addition to the carpenters, the troupe also had to provide a workshop for their scene-painters. To this effect they hired for the preparation of Circé, a

nearby house which afterwards had to be restored to its original order, resulting in payments 'au vitrier de M. Mariage pour raccommodage dans la maison que les peintres ont occupée', and 'pour reblanchir les murailles de la maison du collège que les peintres ont occupée' (R II, 147 v^o). Similarly, for the production of Le Triomphe des dames the two scene-painters, Dalaiseau and Saint-Martin, worked for fifty-five days in a hall in the Hôtel de Rieux, the door of which was guarded by Mathurin, a servant of the Marquis de Sourdéac, who was paid at a rate of 20 sols per day. Liaison with the theatre was provided by Le Breton, who made 105 trips at 5 sols per trip, though his total payment was reduced 22 pistoles (R IV, 100 v^o).

One of the two courtyards alongside the jeu de paume building also contained a well, for on 6 September 1678 a payment of 2 livres 8 sols was made 'pour avoir curé le puits', and some days later on 24 September, 16 livres 6 sols was spent 'pour une corde à puits' (R VI, 67, 81). This is of great importance since it indicates that the company were not dependant^e on the 'fontaines publiques' to satisfy their requirements where water was concerned. These requirements would, in fact, have been considerable, both for scene building and painting and cleaning up afterwards, as well as for domestic use, especially as part of the theatre was residential. More importantly, however, a supply of water was essential for fire prevention.

As well as their individual dressing-rooms, the actors of the Guénégaud company also possessed a 'chambre commune' or green-room in the back-stage area of their theatre. It was here that they would congregate to settle the 'frais ordinaires et extraordinaires' of their spectacular productions, as well as the end of season accounts. They would also meet here for the reading aloud of plays submitted to them for performance. The Registres provide some details of the furnishings

and fittings of the 'chambre commune'. It seems to have been equipped with benches rather than chairs, for on 23 September 1679 M. Barbier was paid 18 livres 'pour avoir garni les bancs de la salle commune' (R VII, 81), and was apparently heated by means of an open fireplace, for on 29 May 1674 3 livres 5 sols were paid 'pour le feu du foyer' (R II, 23), and on 31 August 1679 11 livres were paid 'au maçon qui a refait la cheminée du foyer' (R VII, 61). Since it is doubtful that the Guénégaud would have possessed a 'foyer du public', these both presumably refer to the 'foyer des artistes' or green-room. The theatre auditorium does, however, appear to have been heated, for on 1 September 1679 5 livres 8 sols were paid 'pour des chevilles de fer, du clou et un manteau de cheminée mis au foyer de la salle de théâtre pesant 43 livres' (R VII, 62), and on 1 December 1679 2 livres were paid 'au maçon qui a accommodé le foyer de la salle' (R VII, 119). Indeed, the auditorium would appear to have been equipped with more than one fireplace, since on 19 September 1679 4 livres 11 sols were paid 'pour une des cheminées de la salle' (R VII, 77).

Chappuzeau refers to this practice of heating the theatre for public performances as a novelty, writing in Le Théâtre français: 'L'hiver ils tiennent partout grand feu, ce qui ne s'observait pas anciennement; et il ne resterait plus qu'à chercher l'invention de donner l'été quelque rafraîchissement, ce qui n'est pas facile, parce que tout est fermé, et que l'air ne peut entrer' (pp. 112-3). That it was a considerable item of expenditure is indicated by the fact that in the first two Registres of the Guénégaud company, 'Feu' was printed as a heading under which costs could be entered, just as it had been in the 'Registre d'Hubert', and that in the later account books there are, throughout the winter months, frequent references to the purchase of 'bois à brûler'. Nevertheless, the heating arrangements do not appear to

have always been adequate, since on 8 January 1677 a mémoire submitted by Hubert included 'deux douzaines de chauffrettes à 35 sols chacune' and 'quinze boisseaux de braise à 3 sols le boisseau' (R IV, 109 v^o).

The theatre also possessed a stove, for on 29 October 1677, Dauvilliers was given 'dix louis d'or pour acheter un poêle' (R V, 75), and several furnaces which were under the supervision of the concierge Dufors (R II, 106-8). Another interesting note in this connection is that on 31 December 1679 the haberdasher Cadet was paid 1 livre 10 sols 'pour raccommoder les soufflets' (R VII, 131).

FRONT-OF-HOUSE

We are less well-informed about the front-of-house area at the Guénégaud theatre. Some slight information is provided by the nattier's mémoire of 24 August 1674 which states that, 'premièrement j'ai natté l'allée des premières loges et la tour à l'entrée où il y a neuf toises de natte à raison de trente sols la toise de prix fait' (R II, 59 v^o). Thus, the entrance to the Guénégaud would appear to have been surmounted by some kind of tower, and access to the first or lower row of boxes was by means of an 'allée' or passage. There is another reference to an 'allée' in the Registres when on 2 August 1675 2 livres were paid 'pour blanchir l'allée' (R III, 44). In fact, the walls of the theatre appear to have been whitewashed throughout, for on 28 April 1675 Crosnier was paid 7 livres 10 sols 'pour avoir blanchi des murs' (R III, 3). Access from the theatre entrance to the loges d'avant-scène and stage benches was by means of a gallery whose floor was also covered with natte, since we find in the Registres on 30 January 1680 the record of a payment of 5 livres 8 sols 'pour la natte de la galerie qui va au théâtre' (R VIII, 3).

Near the theatre entrance would have been the 'bureau' or box-office. This was the domaine of Mme Provost and was equipped with a

bench for her comfort, since on 15 May 1676 1 livre was paid 'à Crosnier pour la moitié du raccommodage du banc pour le bureau, l'autre moitié payée par les Italiens' (R IV, 14). Also forming part of the front-of-house facilities at the Guénégaud were the refreshment booths. According to Chappuzeau in Le Théâtre français, these were two in number (p. 151). This may well have been so for the first few years of the company's existence; indeed, the 1674-5 Registre refers to 'le loyer des boutiques à limonade' in the plural (R II, 138 v^o). From 1676 onwards, however, 'la loge à limonade' is constantly referred to in the singular, thus indicating that their number had been reduced. Chappuzeau gives us a detailed description of such booths and their wares:

Il me reste à dire un mot de la distributrice des liqueurs et des confitures, qui occupe deux places, l'une près des loges, et l'autre au parterre, où elle se tient, donnant la première à gouverner par commission. Ces places sont ornées de petits lustres, de quantité de beaux vases et de verres de cristal. On y tient l'été toutes sortes de liqueurs qui rafraîchissent, des limonades, de l'aigre de cèdre, des eaux de framboise, de groseille et de cerise, plusieurs confitures sèches, des citrons, des oranges de la Chine; et l'hiver on y trouve des liqueurs qui réchauffent l'estomac, du rossolis de toutes les sortes, des vins d'Espagne, de la Scioutad, de Rivesaltes et de Saint-Laurent.... Ces distributrices doivent être propres et civiles, et sont nécessaires à la comédie où chacun n'est pas d'humeur à demeurer trois heures sans se réjouir le goût par quelque douce liqueur: mais elles ne peuvent entrer dans le rang des officiers <de la troupe>, parce qu'elles ne tirent point de gages des comédiens, et qu'au contraire elles leur rendent tous les ans de leurs places, dans chaque Hôtel, jusqu'à 800 livres. (p. 151)

At the Guénégaud, these two important women were Mlle Michel and Mme La Villette. They were assisted by a person known as the 'garçon de la limonade' (R I, 84). They paid the Guénégaud company 600 livres per season, usually in instal~~l~~ments of 50 livres, for the privilege of operating the refreshment booths both during their performances and those of the Italian troupe (R III, 142 v^o). This is rather less than the sum quoted by Chappuzeau, but they were still not as fortunate as

the 'distributrice' at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, who was allowed to operate free of charge (p. 151).

The fact that the French troupe alone took the profits from the refreshment booths was yet another matter of which the Italian company complained in their 'Placet au Roi'. This document also indicates that the rent on them was raised between 1676 and 1680, for it states that 'les comédiens français retirent seuls 700 livres de la limonadière'.²³⁰ The Guénégaud company were not, however, entirely inflexible where this rent was concerned, for on two occasions they repaid sums of money to Mlle Michel and Mme La Villette. The first of these occurred in 1676:

Cejourd'hui 18^e avril la troupe s'est assemblée à la chambre commune de l'hôtel et a compté avec Mlle Michel des loyers de la loge à limonade dont elle reste redevable jusqu'à la fin du mois de la somme de 150 livres de laquelle somme la troupe lui a remis gratuitement 70 livres à cause de l'absence de la troupe italienne qui a été en Angleterre....
(R III, 146 v^o)

The second was in 1677, when the company met on 3 March, the day after the 1676-7 season had ended, and decided 'entre autres choses de remettre gratuitement aux demoiselles Michel et La Villette sur le loyer de la loge à limonade la somme de 100 livres à cause du Jubilé pendant lequel ni les Italiens ni la troupe n'ont point joué ainsi la loge n'a valu cette année que 500 livres' (R IV, 133).²³¹

Another room which could either have been situated front-of-house or else backstage was that provided for the use of the theatre guards. We know of its existence from a reference in the 1675-6 Registre stating that a payment of 4 livres 6 sols had been made 'aux menuisiers pour

²³⁰ Dossier Les Italiens.

²³¹ This jubilee which was ordered by Pope Clement X lasted from 20 February to 20 April 1677 and, as a result, the Guénégaud's Easter recess that year was unusually long, lasting from 20 February to 20 April (Jean de La Fontaine, Oeuvres diverses, edited by Pierre Clarac (Paris, 1958), p. 961).

avoir raccommo^dé la demie-porte pour les gardes et femme Des Barres' (R III, 123). It would seem curious that the guards should have shared their room with Mme Des Barres. This lady was the wife of the former porter at the Palais-Royal theatre who was employed as a stage-hand at the Guénégaud,²³² and who is described in the company's Registre as an 'ouvrier et tailleur' (R III, 94 v^o). In 1676, as a seamstress, Mme Des Barres helped in the preparation of Le Triomphe des dames, being paid 16 livres 'pour 31 journées à coudre les toiles de décoration' (R IV, 94 v^o). She also worked on Circé and other plays, receiving small sums 'pour ses services' (R II, 147 v^o; III, 4, 5, 13, 56, 81). In December 1675, the frais ordinaires for L'Inconnu included 3 livres for 'deux garçons tailleurs et la Des Barres' (R III, 3 December 1675 v^o, 100). This would seem to indicate that as well as being employed as a seamstress, when the occasion demanded she was also called upon to act as a dresser for the ladies, the two 'garçons tailleurs' fulfilling this function for the gentlemen, thereby making her presence imperative at all the performances of L'Inconnu. In which case, it is not unlikely that when not so employed she provided a similar service for the public, the room she shared with the guards being situated front-of-house and acting as a cloakroom.

²³² 'Registre d'Hubert', p. 107.

CHAPTER THREE - ADMINISTRATION

Chappuzeau's Le Théâtre français provides us with a wealth of information on seventeenth-century theatre administration. Nevertheless, with the exception of a very few comments specific to particular theatres, this remains largely general, and hitherto not enough has been known about the detail of the day to day running of a theatre contemporaneous with his writings for his assertions to be tested. A study of Chappuzeau in conjunction with a detailed examination of the Guénégaud Registres, therefore, enables us to interpret the mass of information to be found in the latter documents, as well as providing a living, practical example to accord with, complement or occasionally even contradict the former's work.

SHARE SYSTEM

As we have seen, the organizational structure of the Guénégaud troupe was essentially the same as that of the other Parisian companies of the time in that it consisted of a group of shareholders or sociétaires possessing shares of different values, ranging from a full share to Angélique Du Croisy's quarter. Chappuzeau describes this structure as being aristocratic rather than purely democratic, despite the actors' much-vaunted love of democracy, since those holding full shares had a greater say in the troupe's affairs than those with part shares. He adds that the allocation of shares was not based solely on artistic merit, with half shares and sometimes even whole ones being awarded to a husband out of respect for his wife or vice-versa (pp. 97-8).

The shares awarded at the company's foundation did not remain constant for the whole period of the Guénégaud's activity. For example,

Mlle De Brie was only given a half share when the theatre opened,¹ but this was increased to a full share in 1676-7 (R IV, title page). Similarly, Angélique Du Croisy who had only been awarded a quarter share in 1673, had this increased to a half share in 1678-9 (R VI, title page v^o). Conversely, Mlle Guyot who had been attributed a full share in 1673, saw this reduced to a half share by order of Colbert on 6 April 1674,² and then restored to a full share in 1678-9 (R VI, title page v^o); and De Brie who had received a full share in 1673 had had this reduced to a half by the time of his death in March 1676.³ According to La Grange in his Registre, the value of a full share in the company was in 1673-4, 1,418 livres; in 1674-5, 2,586 livres 6 sols; in 1675-6, 3,298 livres 13 sols; in 1676-7, 2,251 livres 1 sol; in 1677-8, 3,149 livres 17 sols; in 1678-9, 3,191 livres 18 sols; in 1679-80, 6,585 livres 10 sols; and in 1680-1, prior to the foundation of the Comédie-Française, 1,779 livres 11 sols (I, 156, 171, 181, 191, 203, 217, 233, 238).

Following the practice of Molière's troupe, who had in turn imitated that of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, a company member could choose to retire at any time, receiving in lieu of a full share 1,000 livres per annum for the remainder of his or her life. The first actor to receive such a pension from Molière's troupe was Louis Béjart who retired in 1670 at the age of forty to join the army.⁴ This pension continued to be paid to him by the Guénégaud company up to his death on 29 September 1678 (R VI, 84 v^o). Similarly, La Roque asked to be allowed

¹ La Grange, Registre, I, 148.

² Ibid., p. 204.

³ Ibid., p. 181.

⁴ Mongrédien et Robert, Dictionnaire biographique, p. 35.

to retire at Easter 1676 and was accorded a pension of 1,000 livres.⁵ His death followed shortly afterwards on 31 July 1676 (R IV, 43).⁶

It was also possible for company members to be forcibly retired or excluded from the troupe. This did not mean that the member in question forfeited his or her right to a pension. Thus, in July 1677, during the course of a long legal battle by which the Guénégaud company attempted to rid itself of its two troublesome associates Sourdéac and Champeron, the troupe had its request for exclusion approved but found itself liable to pay the two machinistes a reduced pension of 500 livres each for the remainder of their lives.⁷

Another instance of a company member being forcibly retired by the troupe occurred in 1679. This was Mlle Auzillon, whom they had been obliged to accept in 1673 with three quarters of a share 'quoi qu'elle ne jouât que très peu, encore toutes les fois comme assistante'.⁸ In accordance with her three-quarter share, the company deemed that it would be within its rights to award her a three-quarter pension of 750 livres. Mlle Auzillon did not agree and appealed against this decision. Judgement was given in her favour and the troupe was told that it would either have to pay her the full 1,000 livres or receive her back into the company. It chose the former option.⁹

⁵ La Grange, Registre, I, 181.

⁶ The manuscript of Chappuzeau's Le Théâtre français had included the unkind comment, subsequently omitted: 'Je parle de La Roque comme d'une personne morte avec le Théâtre du Marais; mais il revit <revint> depuis deux mois avec plusieurs de ses camarades dans la Troupe du Roi' (Vesselovsky, 'Manuscrit', p. 86).

⁷ La Grange, Registre, I, 195.

⁸ Monval, 'Affaire Auzillon', p. 84.

⁹ La Grange, Registre, I, 222, 224.

During the course of this appeal, Mlle Auzillon made some interesting accusations concerning the status of certain of the shares and pensions paid out by the Guénégaud company. She asked:

- S'il n'est pas vrai qu'ils ont toujours donné une demi-part à la femme du nommé Aubry, entrepreneur du pavé, et mille livres de pension au nommé Béjard pendant leur vie quoi qu'ils n'aient jamais joué dans ladite troupe de Guénégaud;

- S'il n'est pas vrai que la femme dudit de La Grange ne joue plus la comédie il y a très longtemps, non plus que celle du nommé Dauvilliers et le nommé Dupin par une incapacité notoire et publique, et ne laissent pas d'avoir leur part à l'ordinaire;

- S'il n'est pas vrai que le nommé Du Croisy a presque toujours la goutte depuis quelques années, et à cause de ce incapable de jouer la comédie, cependant ne laisse pas de retirer sa part;¹⁰

La Grange and Hubert refuted these accusations; Hubert stating that:

... ledit Béjard et ladite Aubry étaient de la troupe faite par le sieur de Molière; que ladite Aubry a joué autant de fois que la troupe l'a jugé à propos; que c'est par cette raison qu'elle a eu demi-part; et à l'égard dudit Béjard, la pension dont il a joui jusqu'à sa mort lui a été continuée par la troupe parce que ladite pension avait été eue pendant le vivant dudit sieur de Molière, et que ladite troupe a toujours subsisté ... que lesdits ~~d~~demoiselles de La Grange et Dauvilliers et le sieur Dupin jouent quand les occasions se présentent et que la troupe le juge à propos, ce qui arriva encore mardi dernier à l'égard de ladicte ~~d~~demoiselle de La Grange qui joua dans Les Femmes savantes son rôle avec beaucoup d'applaudissement ... que le sieur Du Croisy joue très-souvent et d'une manière très utile à la troupe.¹¹

Another unusual pension was the 1,000 livres per annum the Guénégaud company agreed to pay the Champmeslé couple in addition to

¹⁰ Monval, 'Affaire Auzillon', p. 58. Du Croisy's suffering from gout would explain why chaises were hired for his use on so many occasions in 1675-6 - eighteen in January and February alone, when he was presumably appearing in Thomas Corneille's L'Inconnu (R III, 100-20).

¹¹ Monval, 'Affaire Auzillon', pp. 82-4. Mlle La Grange played Bélise in Les Femmes savantes.

their two shares in order to persuade them to transfer from the Hôtel de Bourgogne at Easter 1679 (R VII, title page v°).

When an actual or former company member died, it was the custom, subsequently enshrined in the contract passed between the former Palais-Royal troupe and Sourdéac and Champeron, for his or her share to be paid to any surviving heirs or relatives until the end of the season in which the death occurred.¹² Thus, the half share of Mlle Aubry who died on 3 July 1675 was paid up to 24 March 1676, as was that of De Brie who died on 9 March 1676;¹³ and when La Roque died on 31 July 1676, his pension was continued to his widow up to its full value of 1,000 livres for that season (R IV, 43).

Having a share in the company also meant having a share in the company's debts. One way in which such debts were paid off was by holding money back, with sometimes an extra half or whole share or even more being created to make this possible. Thus, on 1 February 1675, when the company's takings had previously been divided on the basis of fourteen and a half shares, we find in the Registres: 'L'on a commencé aujourd'hui à faire 14 parts et ne rien mettre entre les mains de M. Hubert' (R II, 127). This collective responsibility was not always perceived to be fair, however, as in the case of Sourdéac and Champeron, who, in February 1675, each received an additional 500 livres, 'parce qu'on avait retiré de l'argent sur la masse et que les sieurs de Sourdéac et de Champeron n'étaient point obligés aux dettes de la troupe'.¹⁴

Ironically, it was the two shares of Sourdéac and Champeron that were employed finally to liquidate the company's outstanding debts, when

¹² Bonnassies, Histoire administrative, pp. 29-30.

¹³ La Grange, Registre, I, 181.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 157.

the couple were expelled from the troupe after a long legal battle following the production of Circé. As La Grange recorded in October 1677:

Les parts de Sourdéac et de Champeron dont ils ont été déchus par l'arrêt du 29 juillet de la présente année ont été retirées et mises en séquestre jusqu'à ce jour avec encore deux autres parts, lesquelles quatre parts ont été employées à payer 3,000 livres de principal restant de 14,000 livres au sieur Boudet avec les intérêts.... (I, 198)

Another instance of compensation being awarded to company members occurred in February 1675, when M. and Mlle Dauvilliers and M. and Mlle Dupin, who had been excluded from the troupe in October 1674 as a result of the disputes surrounding the production of Circé, were reinstated.¹⁵ Each couple was awarded 600 livres to compensate them for their share of the takings lost during their four months of exclusion from 18 October 1674 to 12 February 1675 (R II, 138 v°).

If the actors with the addition of the two machinistes, Sourdéac and Champeron, were the permanent shareholders in the company or sociétaires, other associates of the troupe could be awarded shares as and when necessary as payment for their services. This was the most common means by which a playwright was ~~re~~^mⁿerated for his work. He would receive two shares in the takings from a play in five acts and one share for a shorter piece during its first run and, in certain cases, during important revivals.¹⁶ The alternative method of payment was for the company to purchase a work from its author by means of a lump sum of anything up to 200 pistoles or 2,000 livres. This was, as we have seen, the way in which Boursault was paid for Les Amours de Germanicus during

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 164.

¹⁶ For example, Mlle Molière received two parts d'auteur during the revival of Le Malade imaginaire in 1674.

its revival at the Guénégaud in 1673.¹⁷ According to Lancaster, Thomas Corneille's La Mort d'Achilles and Dom César d'Avalos were probably bought outright in a similar manner, although there is no evidence to this effect.¹⁸

It was also possible for a company to adopt one method of payment and then transfer to another. This occurred twice at the Guénégaud. The first instance was in December 1673, and the play in question was Le Comédien poète by Montfleury and Thomas Corneille. The troupe began by awarding them the usual two shares, but, in a situation comparable to that which was to arise with Sourdéac and Champeron, realized that as money was being set aside to pay off the company's debts this was not strictly fair, since 'il ne leur relevait pour leurs dues parts que 573 livres, si elles eussent été calculées comme celles des acteurs, ce qui n'eût pas été juste attendu qu'à chaque représentation on avait ... remis entre les mains d'Hubert une somme dans laquelle les comédiens ne partageaient pas' (R I, 76). The actors, therefore, compensated Montfleury and Thomas Corneille with an additional 660 livres each, even purchasing two purses in which to present the money (R I, 75-7).

The second instance occurred in March 1677, and the play in question was Thomas Corneille's verse adaptation of Molière's Dom Juan. It is recorded in the Registre for 1676-7 that:

Ce jourd'hui lundi 8^e mars 1677 la troupe s'est assemblée à la chambre commune dans la résolution d'achever de payer Le Festin de pierre qu'elle a acheté de la veuve du sieur de Molière et du sieur de Corneille qui l'a mis en vers. Cet achat fait moyennant 200 louis d'or à cause que ledit Festin de pierre n'a pu être représenté que le 12 février de ladite année quoi qu'il le dût être six semaines entières auparavant et que la troupe a trouvé avantageuse à l'occasion des deux Phèdre et d'autant qu'il n'a été payé sur les représentations dudit Festin de pierre que 912

¹⁷ Monval, 'Affaire Auzillon', p. 84.

¹⁸ Lancaster, History, IV, 37.

livres 12 sols ainsi qu'il le voit par le registre. La troupe a délibéré de payer des deniers qui sont entre les mains du sieur La Grange à elle appartenant pour parfaire lesdits deux cents louis d'or. (R IV, 129 v°)

In fact, authors' shares were not always calculated in the same way as those of the actors, and the method by which they were determined varied during the period of the Guénégaud's activity. Chappuzeau in Le Théâtre français describes the system as it existed in late 1673 and early 1674:

Par exemple, si l'on reçoit dans une chambrée ... seize cent soixante livres, et que la troupe soit composée de quatorze parts, l'auteur ce soir-là, aura pour ses deux parts deux cents livres, les autres soixante livres, plus ou moins s'étant levées par préciput pour les frais ordinaires, comme les lumières et les gages des officiers. (pp. 67-8)

That an author was also liable for a share in the expenses of his play's production is clearly indicated in the calculation of money owed to Thomas Corneille for the first few performances of Circé:

La dépense ... se monte à la somme de six mille deux cent soixante et une livres que la troupe a avancées comme dit est pour la pièce de Circé et dont M. de Corneille comme auteur devait ses deux parts. C'est la raison pour laquelle on trouve en écrit le vendredi 22^e mars, le dimanche 24^e mars, et le mardi 26^e mars: partagé sur 17 parts. C'est-à-dire qu'il n'y a que les acteurs et associés qui ont partagé ces trois jours et que M. de Corneille n'a point partagé.... Les acteurs et associés ont partagé sans M. de Corneille
6,672 livres 10 sols

Dépense 6,261 livres

Recette 6,672 livres 10 sols

Reste dû 411 livres

Par le présent compte les acteurs doivent à M. de Corneille ses deux parts de 411 livres, mais il est à remarquer que le serrurier qui a travaillé et fourni pour la machine de Circé n'est pas payé, que son mémoire se monte à 500 livres et que la troupe le doit payer sur les 600 livres que le Roi a données pour une représentation du Malade imaginaire, lesquelles 600 livres sont entre les mains de M. Dauvilliers. Partant la troupe est quitte au présent compte avec M. de Corneille et pareillement M. de Corneille est quitte envers la troupe à peu de choses près. (R II, 146 v°)

Shortly afterwards, however, it was decided to calculate Thomas Corneille's share of the proceeds from Circé rather more advantageously:

'Aujourd'hui vendredi la troupe s'est assemblée et à trouvé à propos de donner à l'auteur de Circé ses parts sur le pied de 14 et ce sans conséquence des autres pièces de machines que les auteurs feront pour ladite troupe' (R III, 21 v^o, 14 June 1675). Lancaster describes how this would have worked out in practice, given that at the time of Circé the troupe was composed of seventeen shares: 'As Thomas Corneille was entitled to two of them, he then received $1/7$ of the profits, instead of his previous $2/19$, while each full-share actor received $1/17$ of the remaining $6/7$.'¹⁹ In fact, when Thomas Corneille's share in the production of Circé was recalculated, it was applied retrospectively even to previous performances of the work. This is made clear in a letter from the author to the Guénégaud company:

Vous voulez bien, Messieurs, que dans un temps où vous tenez votre parole avec la plus honnête exactitude, je vous fasse souvenir qu'en exécution de celle qui m'a été donnée avant et depuis qu'on a commencé de jouer Circé, il reste à faire le calcul de ce qui peut m'être dû pour les représentations où mes parts n'ont été prises que sur dix-neuf. Je trouve, par ce que j'ai reçu, que cela se monte environ à 700 francs, et vos livres vous le feront voir au juste. Je ne vous en parlerais pas encore si je ne considérais qu'il y a parmi vous une part et demie prête d'être éteinte, qui doit contribuer au paiement de cette somme. Je ne vous la demande point tout à la fois. Vous pouvez la tirer peu à peu sur les recettes que vous allez faire, afin que vous vous en aperceviez moins. Si vous savez quelque autre voie de l'acquitter qui vous plaise davantage, j'aurai autant d'honnêteté à faciliter les choses que vous me verrez toujours d'ardeur à embrasser votre parti, et à faire connaître que je suis véritablement,

¹⁹ History, IV, 37.

Votre très humble serviteur
Corneille.²⁰

The company's reaction to this letter is noted in their Registre for 1676-7:

Le huitième jour de mai la troupe s'est assemblée pour délibérer sur la demande que M. de Corneille a faite du surplus de ses parts de Circé qui se monte environ à sept cents livres. La compagnie ayant dessein de satisfaire M. de Corneille et de le conserver comme un auteur de mérite a délibéré de lui donner soixante louis d'or et de les prendre dans la bourse qui est entre les mains de M. de La Grange, à la charge de remplacer au plus tôt par la troupe lesdits soixante louis d'or, attendu que ledit argent est destiné pour payer le loyer de l'hôtel où se représente la comédie; et la troupe a promis en même temps d'en tenir compte audit sieur de La Grange. (R IV, 10 v^o)²¹

Despite the company's protestations to the contrary, it would seem that parts d'auteur continued to be calculated in this way for Thomas Corneille's L'Inconnu, since at a time when the company was composed of seventeen shares, La Grange records that for this production there were 'deux parts d'auteur sur quinze à cause de Baraillon pour les habits de ballet' (I, 177). It would also appear to have been applied to other authors and other genres, for after the first performance of Pradon's Electre on 17 December 1677, La Grange records the value of a 'part après les deux parts d'auteur payées' (I, 200).

As the above reference to the 'parts d'auteur' for L'Inconnu indicates, authors were not the only company associates to receive shares in lieu of payment. The individual most frequently recompensed in

²⁰ Richmond L. Hawkins, Newly Discovered French Letters (Cambridge, Mass., 1933), pp. 11-12. The company was, in fact, reduced by two shares during the course of this season: the half shares of Mlle Aubry, who died on 3 July 1675, and De Brie, who died on 9 March 1676, and the full share of La Roque, who retired at the end of the 1675-6 season (La Grange, Registre, I, 181).

²¹ Hawkins is mistaken in assuming that these negotiations took place in 1675 (French Letters, p. 11).

this manner was M. Baraillon, Tailleur Ordinaire des Ballets du Roi, and costumier both to Molière's troupe and, subsequently, that of the Guénégaud. Although company members were responsible for purchasing their own costumes other than for appearances at Court, those of the assistants were provided for them by the troupe. Where the sums involved were not considerable Baraillon was paid in cash like any other tradesperson with whom the company dealt. When a significant number of assistants was involved, as in the production of a machine play or a comédie-ballet with elaborate intermèdes, Baraillon was awarded a share in the proceeds from that production, both for its first run, and often also for any revivals. Plays for which Baraillon was paid in this way at the Guénégaud included Le Bourgeois gentilhomme (R II, 3 v^o), Le Malade imaginaire (R II, 15), Panurge (R II, 51, 63), L'Inconnu and Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.²²

The other person recorded as being paid in this way by the Guénégaud troupe is the composer Marc-Antoine Charpentier, who received a half-share in the production of Le Malade imaginaire. Thus, on 4 May 1674, the additional shares were calculated at 'trois parts et demie d'auteur, tailleur et musicien de 38 livres 10 sols chacune', and on 29 June, Charpentier received 12 livres for his half share (R II, 13, 36).

COMPANY MEETINGS

The company would congregate after every performance in their salle commune or green room to settle the day's expenses or 'frais ordinaires', decide how much money should be set aside towards paying off their debts and divide the remainder of the takings according to the shares allocated to them. They would also assemble for other financial meetings, to settle the 'frais extraordinaires' of spectacular

²² La Grange, Registre, I, 172, 177, 186, 187, 198, 200, 206, 209.

productions, to hear how money placed in the hands of certain individuals had been spent, or to deal with long-standing debts or obligations. According to Chappuzeau in Le Théâtre français, such meetings occurred once a month (p. 110). At the Guénégaud they appear to have been held as and when required, with meetings on a regular basis only being instituted in 1682.²³ One important meeting of this kind did, however, occur at the end of each theatrical season, when all the money received during the course of the year from the Italians for the hire of the chandeliers, from the ladies in charge of the refreshment booths, and from the tenants of the apartments within the theatre building was accounted for, as well as outgoings on the leasing of the theatre and supplementary workshops and the payment of debts.

Chappuzeau gives other reasons for which the company would come together: 'tantôt c'est pour la lecture des ouvrages que les auteurs leur apportent, tantôt pour leur disposition et pour en distribuer les rôles, ou pour les répétitions' (p. 109). There is only one reference to such a play-selection meeting in the Guénégaud Registres, when on 7 July 1675, M. Dauvilliers received 42 livres 5 sols 'pour un repas fait avec la compagnie après la lecture de la pièce de M. Abeille' (R III, 33). This was no doubt Abeille's tragedy Coriolan, performed by the Guénégaud company for the first time on 24 January 1676 (R III, 121).

Another reason given for such meetings by Chappuzeau is to draw up a 'répertoire': 'C'est-à-dire une liste de vieilles pièces, pour entretenir le théâtre durant les chaleurs de l'été et les promenades de l'automne, et n'être pas obligés, tous les soirs qu'on représente, de délibérer à la hâte et en tumulte de la pièce qu'on doit annoncer' (pp. 109-10). The only reference to such a list having been drawn up at the Guénégaud occurs in the Registres on 3 March 1677, when the whole troupe

²³ Chevalley, 'Premières Assemblées', pp. 443-51.

assembled in the chambre commune, 'pour régler et ordonner des choses que la troupe avait à faire et des pièces qu'il fallait apprendre pour après Pâques' (R IV, 133). Further reasons for meetings given by Chappuzeau include the necessity of making repairs to the theatre or of increasing the size of the troupe (p. 110).

As we have seen, the conduct of these meetings was aristocratic rather than democratic in that the greater the share a member had in the company, the greater the say he or she was allowed in its affairs. Within this framework, however, Chappuzeau maintains that sexual equality was the rule: 'L'autorité de l'état est partagée entre les deux sexes, les femmes lui étant utiles autant ou plus que les hommes, et elles ont voix délibérative en toutes les affaires qui regardent l'intérêt commun' (p. 97). One exception would appear to have been the play-selection meetings which, again according to Chappuzeau, were rarely attended by the actresses of the troupe who, if they did go, tended 'par modestie' to leave such judgements to the men (p. 66). Some years later in 1683, this custom was officially extended to all aspects of the troupe's administration, when at the Comédie-Française, first those actresses with a husband in the company and then, after protests, all actresses were excused from attending company meetings.²⁴

OFFICIERS

The general administration of the Guénégaud company's affairs was handled by officers who were of two types: 'bas officiers' employed by the troupe and paid wages by it (concierge, copyist, musicians, box-office staff, ushers, porters, designers, scene-painters, carpenters, assistants, stage-hands, candlemaker, printer, bill-sticker), and 'hauts officiers', who were shareholders in the company and, therefore, unpaid

²⁴ Chevalley, 'Premières Assemblées', p. 445.

for their administrative duties (Trésorier, Sécrétaire and Contrôleur). Another officer of the troupe, although not strictly administrative and, therefore, considered separately by Chappuzeau, was the Orateur.²⁵

ORATEUR

The Orateur of a company had, according to Chappuzeau, two main functions. The first of these, as the name implies, was that of addressing the audience at the close of the day's performance: 'Le discours qu'il vient faire à l'issue de la comédie a pour but de captiver la bienveillance de l'assemblée. Il lui rend grâces de son attention favorable, il lui annonce la pièce qui doit suivre celle qu'on vient de représenter, et l'invite à la voir par quelques éloges qu'il lui donne' (p. 140). These speeches were generally short and unrehearsed, but on special occasions, as when a member of the royal family was present, or at the end of a season when the Orateur was bidding his public farewell for some weeks, they would be more elaborate. He would also announce new works to be presented by the troupe in the near future so as to whet the audience's appetite, and show off the quality of the authors the company was able to attract.²⁶

The Orateur's second duty was that of writing the posters which would be displayed on the morning following a performance to announce the forthcoming presentation. In addition, it was the Orateur's job to

²⁵ The various implications of the term 'Orateur' and whether or not the Guénégaud company can be said to have had one were discussed in my chapter on the founding of the Guénégaud theatre. In the interests of clarity, the term has continued to be used throughout this chapter to designate the person who was responsible for the theatre's publicity, both written and oral.

²⁶ More details of the different types of publicity provided by the Orateur are given by William Brooks in his three articles: 'Chappuzeau'; 'Harangue or dialogue? The publicity of the Orateurs on the French stage, 1634-1673', Seventeenth Century French Studies, 8 (1986), pp. 166-76; and 'Reflections on Seventeenth-Century Verse Affiches', Theatre Research International, 10 (1985), pp. 199-213.

call the company together at the theatre or elsewhere for play-readings, rehearsals or general-meetings. At these, despite the much-vaunted equality of company members, the Orateur does seem to have held a somewhat pre-eminent position, as Chappuzeau himself admits:

Ce serait à lui d'en faire l'ouverture, et de proposer les choses; et quoi qu'il n'ait que sa voix, elle pourrait être suivie, et l'on pourrait avoir de la déférence pour ses avis' quand on est persuadé qu'il est intelligent et versé dans les affaires, et qu'il a du crédit auprès des grands. Quand cela se rencontre, la troupe se repose sur ses soins, elle lui confie ses intérêts, et il trouve de son côté de la gloire à la servir ce qui lui tient lieu de récompense. (p. 141)

As we saw when considering the founding of the Guénégaud company, its Orateur was La Grange.

HAUTS OFFICIERS

Trésorier

The duties of the Trésorier, according to Chappuzeau, involved keeping safe the 'deniers de la communauté', spending them as necessary, and keeping account books so as to be able to report back to the troupe on the state of their finances (pp. 143-4). In 1673-4, this post would appear to have been filled at the Guénégaud by Hubert, for on almost every page of the Registre for that season sums are entered as being 'restées ès mains de M. Hubert'. The same is true for the greater part of the following season, 1674-5, and here the uses to which these sums are to be put are occasionally stipulated - for example 'pour les cas imprévus' (R II, 91), or more often 'pour les termes' (e.g. R II, 58-9). In fact, for the greater part of the time, the Trésorier's duties at the Guénégaud appear to have been divided between several individuals, and not all of them share-holding members of the company. Thus, during the 1674-5 season, sums are described as being 'restés ès mains' or

'retirés par' the company's concierge, Dufors. These would, no doubt, originally have been to pay tradespeople or workmen employed by the troupe on a day to day basis. Dufors, however, came to play an ever-increasing rôle in the company's financial affairs; for example receiving sums to be set aside towards the payment of Louis Béjart's pension in December 1674 and January 1675 (R II, 112-20); and by February 1675, seems almost to have taken over from Hubert as Trésorier, regularly setting aside sums for the payment of rent on the theatre building (e.g. R II, 128). Hubert was finally officially replaced as Trésorier by La Grange at the time of the Guénégaud company's production of Circé in March 1674, for it was he who took over responsibility for the theatre's rent at that time. La Grange appears to have continued in this rôle for the remainder of the period of the Guénégaud's activity.

It would seem that, in addition, it was customary to delegate a different member of the company to record and settle the frais extraordinaires of spectacular productions. In the case of Circé it was Dauvilliers assisted by Dufors who performed this function (R II, 139, 148 v^o). Indeed, Dufors continued to play an important rôle in the Guénégaud's financial affairs, paying the frais ordinaires and pensions, and sometimes also receiving the rent money, to the extent that by the time of the production of L'Inconnu in November 1675, it was he alone who was responsible for settling the frais extraordinaires (R III, 93-101). This pattern of La Grange and Dufors dividing the responsibility for the troupe's financial affairs between them continued uninterrupted for the following two seasons, 1676-7 and 1677-8, with Dufors additionally being charged with the payment of the taxes known as 'boues et lanternes' (e.g. R IV, 55), and with the renting of the supplementary workshops (e.g. R V, 11). It was he also who settled the frais extraordinaires for Le Triomphe des dames and Le Festin de pierre (R IV,

45-50, 90-100, 122 v^o-125). La Grange, meanwhile, continued to deal with the theatre rent and other major expenses.²⁷

In 1678-9, Dufors appears to have been replaced in his financial duties, partly by Mme Mécard, the company's chandelière, in whose hands sums are now left at the end of each day's settling of accounts, and partly by La Grange, who from 24 August onwards receives the sums set aside for the payment of pensions (R VI, 55), and who in November 1679 pays the frais extraordinaires of La Devineresse (R VII, 114-9). Although Dufors's name appears increasingly infrequently in the Registres, and payments made to an anonymous concierge from 31 May 1678 onwards would seem to indicate that he had been replaced in this function also (R VI, 18), Dufors and his wife continued to be employed by the Guénégaud company. Indeed, the former received an additional payment of 1 livre 10 sols on 1 March 1680 for having worked for the Italian troupe, and four days later was awarded a 66 livre bonus by the Guénégaud company for work he had carried out on La Devineresse (R VII, 156, 158).

'Secrétaire' and 'Contrôleur'

The other two 'hauts officiers' described by Chappuzeau in Le Théâtre français are the Secrétaire and the Contrôleur. The former was

²⁷ Every Sunday evening, 30 livres were set aside towards the payment of the rent on the theatre building, as is made clear in the Registre of 1678-9: 'Le mercredi 8 mars 1679 M. de La Grange l'un des acteurs de la troupe a compté avec la compagnie de tous les deniers qui lui avaient été mis entre les mains tant pour payer les termes et loyers de l'hôtel de la comédie comme il est fait mention sur ce présent Registre tous les dimanches réglés à trente livres' (R VI, 156 v^o). Quittances received by La Grange in respect of the payment of rent spanning the period 1677 to 1687 are to be found in the Minutier Central. Curiously, these payments are said to be for 'le prix du loyer dudit jeu de paume et de la maison voisine', rather than the two houses specified in Sourdéac and Champeron's original lease (Madeleine Jurgens and Marie-Antoinette Fleury, Documents du Minutier Central concernant l'histoire littéraire (1650-1700) (Paris, 1960), pp. 107-8..

responsible for keeping the Registres in which the day's takings and expenses and the respective shares of company members were recorded, and for receiving each day's accounts from the box-office. The latter was present at the end of each day's performance when the accounts were being balanced and entered a record of them in the Registre. Chappuzeau adds that these two posts were often combined (p. 144). It is impossible to say whether this was the case at the Guénégaud, or, indeed, which company members performed these functions. The fact that the handwriting in the Registres differs from day to day would seem to indicate that the company had no permanent Contrôleur, possibly anticipating the practice of having a group of Semainiers operating in rotation that was later to be employed at the Comédie-Française.²⁸ Nor would it appear that the Guénégaud's Secrétaire was entirely successful in keeping safe the company's account books, for La Grange notes in his Registre, '1^{er} Registre resté entre les mains du Sr de Champeron, depuis rendu' (I, 150).

BAS OFFICIERS

Concierge

Chappuzeau describes the duties of a theatre concierge as follows: 'Le Concierge a soin d'ouvrir l'Hôtel et de le fermer, de le tenir propre et en bon ordre, et après la comédie de visiter exactement partout, de peur d'accident du feu' (p. 145). As we saw above, Dufors at the Guénégaud frequently performed duties far more onerous than these, being charged with the payment of frais ordinaires and extraordinaires,

²⁸ Emmanuel Des Essarts, Les Trois Théâtres de Paris ou abrégé historique de l'établissement de la Comédie-Française, de la Comédie-Italienne et de l'Opéra (Paris, 1777), p. 67.

pensions, rent and taxes.²⁹ Mme Dufors also on occasion received sums from the troupe, no doubt for services she herself rendered, or else when acting on her husband's behalf.

Copiste

In the seventeenth century it was not the custom for each actor to have an entire copy of the play which was to be performed. For new works a single copy, as yet unpublished, would be given by the author to the troupe, and for revivals, a single printed copy purchased. Each individual's rôle would then be copied out by a theatre employee and distributed to be learned prior to the commencement of rehearsals. The copyist at the Guénégaud theatre was Lapierre who had been associated with Molière's troupe from as early as 1663-4.³⁰ In the Registres there are frequent references to sums paid to him, both for rôles copied and for the purchase of scripts. It was not unusual for these transactions to be carried out up to six months before the work was finally added to the company's repertory, which gives us some idea of how far in advance the troupe habitually planned. Payments for the copying of plays ranged between 3 livres (Iphigénie by Le Clerc and Coras, R III, 20) and 13 livres 10 sols (L'Inconnu, R III, 97 v°). Lapierre's other duties included initialling or countersigning tickets after they had been received from the printer, for on 30 September 1678 he received 1 livre 10 sols 'pour parapher les billets', and on 6 January 1679, 8 sols 'pour avoir paraphé les billets du parterre' (R VI, 86, 130).

²⁹ It is, therefore, curious that, according to H.C. Lancaster, Dufort <sic> and a certain Garçon, 'valet de théâtre', were charged in 1694 with selling off property belonging to the Comédie-Française. Nevertheless, Dufort was still in possession of his post in 1697 (Lancaster, History, IV, 34).

³⁰ Premier Registre de La Thorillièrre (1663-1664), edited by Georges Monval (Paris, 1890), p. 98.

According to Chappuzeau, it was also part of the copyists' job to act as 'souffleur' or prompter, an aspect of the position which causes him to offer a considerable amount of detailed advice:

Il est de sa charge de tenir la pièce à une des ailes du théâtre, tandis qu'on la représente, et d'avoir toujours les yeux dessus pour relever l'acteur s'il tombe en quelque défaut de mémoire; ce qui, dans le style des collèges s'appelle souffler. Il faut pour cela qu'il soit prudent, et sache bien discerner quand l'acteur s'arrête à propos, et fait une pause nécessaire, pour ne lui rien suggérer alors, ce qui le troublerait au lieu de le soulager. J'en ai vu en de pareilles rencontres crier au Souffleur trop prompt, de se taire, soit pour n'avoir pas besoin de son secours, soit pour faire voir qu'ils sont sûrs de leur mémoire, quoi qu'elle pût leur manquer. Aussi faut-il que celui qui suggère s'y prenne d'une voix qui ne soit, s'il est possible, entendue que du théâtre, et qui ne se puisse porter jusqu'au parterre, pour ne pas donner sujet à de certains auditeurs qui rient de tout et font des éclats à quelques endroits de comédie où d'autres ne trouveraient pas matière d'entr'ouvrir les lèvres. (pp. 145-6)

There is no record in the Guénégaud Registres of Lapierre having acted as Souffleur as well as Copiste. In fact, the only payment for such services was made to the Concierge Dufors, who on 10 January 1676 received 8 livres 'pour avoir soufflé pour des chambrées' (R III, 115). Lancaster is mistaken when he writes that the Souffleur at the Guénégaud was a certain Saint-Georges who retired in 1681.³¹ The latter was the Souffleur at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, moving to the Guénégaud with that company on the formation of the Comédie-Française in 1680.³²

Violons

We have already considered the positioning of the musicians at the Guénégaud when examining the design of the theatre's auditorium. We have also seen that theatre companies were restricted to the use of six

³¹ History, IV, 34.

³² See Georges and J. Monval, 'Le Souffleur de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne: premier historiographe de l'Académie de Peinture (1624-1705)', Bulletin de la Société d'Histoire du Théâtre (1909), pp. 48-61.

instrumentalists and two singers by the terms of the ordonnance issued in Lully's favour on 30 April 1673.³³ These measures became still more severe during the course of the period of the Guénégaud's activity, as we will see when considering the production of Circé. It should not be thought, however, that musicians were only required for spectacular productions. As we have seen, it was, according to Chappuzeau, the custom for them to perform in the intervals between the acts of a play whatever its genre (p. 147); and William Schwartz notes in his analysis of the 'Registre d'Hubert' that Molière's troupe seems to have decided in 1672-3 to make orchestral music a regular feature of all its programmes.³⁴ This practice apparently continued at the Guénégaud, at least during the first season of its activity, for we find in the Registre for 1673-4 references to payments to 'violons' and 'musicien et violons' for performances of Thomas Corneille's tragedy La Mort d'Achille (R I, 77, 81-2). Supplementary musicians were also employed as required to provide special effects for particular plays. Thus, trumpet and drum players were hired for Thomas Corneille's Le Triomphe de dames and Quinault's Les Coups de l'amour et de la fortune, for which last, indeed, a new drum had to be purchased (R IV, 89 v^o; V, 40-1). References of this last type are rare, for the majority of the instrumentalists mentioned in the Guénégaud Registres are described as 'violons', and only rarely are we able to discover what other instruments were played. Further difficulties arise in that certain individuals appear to have performed more than one function, acting as instrumentalist or vocalist, assistant or choreographer, depending on

³³ Nutter and Thoinan, Origines, p. 286. In 1718 at the Comédie-Française these instruments were 'trois dessus de violon, un hautbois et deux basses' (Nicolas Boindin, Lettres historiques sur tous les spectacles de Paris (Paris, 1719), p. 10.

³⁴ Schwartz, 'Molière's theater', p. 416.

what was required, making it all the more difficult for us to determine in what capacity they appeared in a particular production.

Payments to musicians varied according to the work being performed and the type or amount of music required, but generally were between 1 livre 10 sols and 5 livres 10 sols per performance for instrumentalists, with the most usual payments being 2 livres 5 sols for ritournelles, and 3 livres or 3 livres 15 sols for unspecified musical contributions, and between 3 livres and 7 livres per performance for vocalists. Occasionally, however, singers were paid a lump sum, as when M. Gaye received 33 livres for his participation in Circé (R II, 144 v^o). Among the bonuses enjoyed by vocalists were that they regularly had chaises hired for them by the company to bring them to rehearsals and performances (e.g. R II, 45-50), and that, as they performed on stage, along with the other assistants they had their costumes purchased for them.

Among the singers employed by the Guénégaud troupe at different times were Mlle Babet, Mlle Bastonnet, M. Bourdelou, André Carles, M. Delaporte, M. Gaye, and Louis-Joseph Poussin.³⁵ Instrumentalists included the singer and theorbo player André Carles, M. Chauffin, Jean Converset, M. Courcelles, the singer and harpsichordist Delaporte, M.

³⁵ For further details of productions on which these singers and musicians were employed, see Appendix One: 'The Guénégaud troupe, its employees and associates'.

Dufresne, M. Dumont, Jacques Duvivier, the choreographer La Montagne,³⁶ Pierre Marchand, and M. Nivelon.³⁷ Another musician whose name appears in the Guénégaud Registres is François Tibaut, who, although described as a 'violon', appeared as a 'grand voleur' in Circé (R II, 139 ff.).

Of the musicians above, Jean Converset, Jacques Duvivier and Pierre Marchand had previously been associated with Molière's troupe,³⁸ as had the two singers M. Gaye and Louis-Joseph Poussin, the former having participated in many of Molière's court presentations (Le Ballet des Muses, Les Amants magnifiques, Le Bourgeois gentilhomme),³⁹ and the latter having been one of those vocalists who consented to appear in Psyché 'à visage découvert habillés comme les comédiens'.⁴⁰

Another person with musical associations whose name appears in the Guénégaud Registres is a certain François, described as 'porteur de

³⁶ On only one occasion is La Montagne credited as having made a specifically musical contribution, when his name is included under 'Musique' in the list of the frais ordinaires for an unnamed work, it being stated that he received 3 livres 'et pour la conduite', i.e. the choreography, (R II, 11 v^o). This list is very similar to that for frais ordinaires of Le Malade imaginaire, and may constitute an early rough draft. In the second list, however, La Montagne's name only appears among those of the assistants (R II, 13 v^o), and although he is associated with a considerable number of other productions, it was always in his capacity as dancer and choreographer. La Montagne also appeared in at least one of the productions of the Italian actors with whom the Guénégaud company shared their theatre. This was Le Baron de Foeneste, Act V of which included a masque where 'La Montagne (gagiste) vêtu en Polichinelle, danse avec Le Fèvre (autre gagiste) habillé en nourrice' (Claude and François Parfaict, Histoire de l'ancien théâtre italien depuis son origine en France jusqu'à sa suppression en l'année 1697 (Paris, 1767, reprinted New York, 1978), p. 432).

³⁷ Like La Montagne, Nivelon's name appears under the heading 'Musique' in the first list of the frais ordinaires of Le Malade imaginaire (R II, 11 v^o), only to reappear under 'Assistants' in the second (R II, 13 v^o). His subsequent participation in Guénégaud productions was no doubt also in this capacity.

³⁸ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 163.

³⁹ Molière, Oeuvres complètes, II, 268, 666, 703.

⁴⁰ La Grange, Registre, I, 126.

violons' in 1674 (R II, 11 v°), and who received 2 livres 'pour port d'instruments' in 1675, when he is described as 'garçon de violons' (R II, 96 v°). The greater part of the time, however, François appears to have been employed as an assistant, appearing in Le Malade imaginaire, Panurge, L'Inconnu and Le Bourgeois gentilhomme. Someone of this name had been associated with Molière's troupe for a considerable number of years, being mentioned ten times in La Thorillière's first Registre, in his edition of which Monval identifies him as François Doufan,⁴¹ and frequently in his second, of which Schwartz suggests that his family name might have been Le Sellier.⁴² A François Loriau appears in the documents concerning the production of Le Malade imaginaire,⁴³ whom Sylvie Chevalley describes as an 'intendant magasinier', while at the same time identifying him with the François who appeared in that play and who is mentioned in the 'Registre d'Hubert'.⁴⁴ A François Lariau appears in the Guénégaud Registres, being paid 20 sols for acting as a manoeuvre or stagehand for Circé (R II, 139 ff.). It is impossible to say whether any or all of these were one and the same person.

In addition to La Montagne, another choreographer employed by the Guénégaud company was Antoine Desbrosses who arranged the entrées for Le Triomphe des dames. He had previously worked both for Molière's troupe,⁴⁵ and for that of the Marais, where he was in 1665, according to Deierkauf-Holsboer, the company's dancing master.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Premier Registre de La Thorillière, p. xi.

⁴² William Leonard Schwartz, 'Light on Molière in 1664 from Le Second Registre de La Thorillière', PMLA, 53 (1938), pp. 1054-75 (p. 1060).

⁴³ Thierry, Documents, pp. 116-20.

⁴⁴ Chevalley, 'Etude critique', p. 190.

⁴⁵ Schwartz, 'Light on Molière', p. 1070.

⁴⁶ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, II, 159.

The only composer to be employed by the Guénégaud company was Marc-Antoine Charpentier, who, following Molière's break with Lully in 1671, provided in 1672 music to replace that of the Italian composer for La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas, Le Mariage forcé, and Le Médecin malgré lui, and in 1673 produced the score for Molière's new work Le Malade imaginaire.⁴⁷ At the Guénégaud, Charpentier provided the music for Circé, L'Inconnu and Le Triomphe des dames. The name of another composer does, however, appear in the Guénégaud Registres, when on 3 September 1673 it was recorded that 12 livres 10 sols had been paid to Charles Coypeau, sieur Dassoucy, lutanist and former music-master to the future Louis XIV (R I, 28).⁴⁸ This was probably not a payment for a musical contribution, however, but rather a charitable hand-out, for, as Chappuzeau writes: 'la charité qui couvre une multitude de péchés, est fort en usage entre les comédiens; ils en donnent des marques assez visibles, ils font des aumônes et particulières et générales, et les troupes de Paris prennent de leur mouvement des boîtes de plusieurs hôpitaux et maisons religieuses, qu'on leur ouvre tous les mois' (p. 90). Further information on charity among actors is given by Nicolas Boindin, writing of the Comédie-Française in 1718: 'Ils pratiquent entre

⁴⁷ Robert W. Lowe, 'Marc-Antoine Charpentier, compositeur chez Molière', Etudes classiques, 33 (1965), pp. 34-41 (p. 38).

⁴⁸ Dassoucy had in the past been associated both with the Marais company and with Molière's troupe. In 1650, he had provided the music for Pierre Corneille's Andromède for the Marais company (Pierre Corneille, Andromède, tragédie, edited by Christian Delmas (Paris, 1974), pp. xiii-xiv); in 1653, he left Paris for the provinces where he met Molière and his troupe. Following travels in Italy, Dassoucy returned to Paris in about 1670, hoping to renew his friendship with Molière, only to be disappointed when the playwright preferred to continue his collaboration with Charpentier. In 1673, Dassoucy announced a series of 'concerts chromatiques' but these were never performed, and the composer was imprisoned, possibly as a result of Lully's jealousy. Dassoucy spent the last years of his life adding to his output of literary works and died in 1677 (The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, edited by Stanley Sadie, 20 vols (London, 1980), V, 252).

eux plusieurs charités. En voici une. Quand un comédien de province voyage et passe par Paris, il peut hardiment s'adresser à eux; s'il a besoin de quelque secours pour continuer son chemin, il est sûr de l'obtenir'.⁴⁹ Such payments occur throughout the Registres, with occasionally the individual or organization in question being named. It is quite understandable, therefore, given Dassoucy's past association with both Molière and the Marais troupe, and the difficult circumstances he found himself in following his return to Paris, that the Guénégaud company should have made such a charitable payment to him in 1673.

Other 'charités' paid out by the Guénégaud troupe may also have had musical associations. On 13 and 16 March 1674, 5 livres and 2 livres 5 sols respectively were paid to a certain Mlle de Beauchamps; on 3 March 1679, 22 livres were paid to M. de Beauchamps; and on 8 August 1679, 8 livres were paid to M. de Beauchamps fils (R I, 108-9; VI, 154; VII, 50 v^o). One celebrated Beauchamps with whom Molière had been associated was Pierre de Beauchamps (1630-95), the dancer and choreographer son of Louis de Beauchamps, himself the son of Molière's great-uncle.⁵⁰ Pierre de Beauchamps choreographed Le Mariage forcé, Psyché, La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas and Le Malade imaginaire,⁵¹ as well as performing in court presentations of Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Les Amants magnifiques and Le Bourgeois gentilhomme.⁵² In 1672, he became choreographer to the Académie de Musique, collaborating with Perrin and Cambert on Pomone, remaining in his post when Lully took over direction, and only retiring from the professional theatrical world upon the

⁴⁹ Lettres historiques, p. 15.

⁵⁰ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller; Cent ans, p. 464.

⁵¹ La Grange, Registre, I, 65, 126, 137, 144.

⁵² Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, pp. 464, 483.

Italian composer's death in 1687.⁵³ It would seem highly unlikely, therefore, that either Pierre de Beauchamps or any of his family were in need of charitable hand-outs during the period 1674-80. Beauchamps, however, was also the stage-name of a seventeenth-century theatrical family. Their head was Nicolas Biet who, together with his wife Françoise Petit, was a member of the Marais company in 1647 and 1653. Nicolas Biet died before March 1670, but his widow is known to have been still alive in 1679,⁵⁴ and may well have been the Mlle de Beauchamps mentioned in the Registres. Nicolas Biet and Françoise Petit had four sons, all of whom entered the acting profession: Jean, Charles, Henri and Claude, ^{later} the using the stage-name Hauteville.⁵⁵ Any one of the other three could be the M. de Beauchamps or M. de Beauchamps fils who received charity from the Guénégaud company.⁵⁶

Music was not only required for performances at the Guénégaud, but also for rehearsals, particularly those of the numerous dancers involved in the production of machine plays. One musician involved in these was Jaques Duvivier, who received 11 livres for the rehearsals of L'Inconnu (R III, 97 v^o). Another, more surprisingly, was the playwright and journalist Donneau De Visé, who received 33 livres 'pour avoir joué du theorbe à la répétition de Circé' (R III, 17).

⁵³ Régine Astier, 'Pierre Beauchamps et les "Ballets de Collège"', La Recherche en danse, 2 (1983), pp. 45-51 (p. 48).

⁵⁴ Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique, p. 24.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 24-6, 112.

⁵⁶ Other named individuals who received charity from the Guénégaud company include Mme Du Perche, the wife of Jacques Crosnier alias Du Perche, and herself a member of the Marais troupe in 1654 (3 livres on 6 February 1674; R I, 93); Mlle de La Roque (12 sols on 27 November 1676 - her husband had died on 31 July previous; R IV, 93); M. Desrosiers, a member of the Marais troupe from 1660 to 1665 (12 livres on 18 April 1679; R VII, 4); and M. de Hautefeuille (12 livres on 25 April 1679; R VII, 7).

The musical instrument most frequently mentioned in the Guénégaud Registres, leaving aside the innumerable references to 'violons', is the harpsichord. These were constantly being hired (R II, 95), moved around (R III, 62), repaired, and on one occasion even revarnished (R VIII, 23). The only person to be mentioned by name in this connection is Delaporte, who on 22 March 1680 received 3 livres 'pour avoir raccommode le clavecin' (R VII, 170).

Receveur au bureau

Chappuzeau describes the duties of this bas officier thus:

Le Receveur au bureau distribue à ceux qui viennent à la comédie les billets dont il est chargé, et qu'il a reçus par compte. Il est responsable de tout l'argent qui se trouve faux ou léger, et ne doit pas être ignorant en cette matière. Il ne quitte le bureau que lorsque la comédie est achevée, et il n'y en a qu'un pour toute la recette du théâtre, de l'amphithéâtre, des loges et du parterre. L'argent est porté d'abord au Trésorier, et s'il se trouve quelque espèce où il y ait du défaut, le Receveur comme j'ai dit, la doit faire bonne, et on la lui rend. (p. 147)

This responsible position was filled at the Guénégaud by Mme Provost. The daughter of two 'ouvriers de loges' at the Petit-Bourbon, she had long been associated with Molière's troupe where she had performed the same duties.⁵⁷ Her husband, the actor Marin Prévost, was also on occasion employed by the Guénégaud company, as when he appeared as a 'grand voleur' in Circé. Their son appeared in the same play as a 'petit voleur', as did Prévost's brother (R II, 139 ff.).⁵⁸ At the time of Circé, Mme Provost was assisted in her duties by Mme Hubert, the wife of the Guénégaud company member. Herself an actress, Mme Hubert had been

⁵⁷ Chevalley, 'Etude critique', pp. 192-3.

⁵⁸ The spelling of Provost is consistent throughout the Guénégaud Registres. Mme Provost's husband's name, however, is generally found elsewhere as Prévost, and this usage has been conformed with.

together with her husband in the Marais company from 1660-4. Mongrédien and Robert are, however, mistaken when they assert that she was a member of the Troupe Royale in 1677.⁵⁹

Contrôleurs des portes

Chappuzeau writes:

Les Contrôleurs des portes qui sont, l'un à l'entrée du parterre, et l'autre à celle des loges, sont commis à la distribution des billets de contrôle, pour placer les gens qui se présentent, aux lieux où ils doivent aller selon la qualité des billets qu'ils apportent du bureau, où ils les ont été prendre. Ils ont soin aussi que les portiers fassent leur devoir, qu'ils ne reçoivent de l'argent de qui que ce soit, et qu'ils traitent civilement tout le monde. (p. 147)

That the Guénégaud employed two such contrôleurs and that they were stationed in the positions suggested by Chappuzeau is known from a statement of the frais ordinaires per performance drawn up on 26 February 1675, which records that 3 livres were paid 'pour deux contrôleurs que la troupe a accordés ^à Messieurs de Sourdéac et de Champeron pour recevoir les billets l'un à la porte des loges et l'autre à celle du parterre' (R II, 138 v°). This was shortly before the production of Circé and, as La Grange records in his Registre, the troupe had been forced to make certain concessions to go some way towards settling their differences with Sourdéac and Champeron and enable preparations for the play to go ahead: 'la Troupe a été contrainte pour avoir la paix et entretenir union d'accorder deux contrôleurs aux sieurs de Sourdéac et Champeron' (I, 169). He adds, however, in a marginal note, 'que Champeron voulait introduire son frère au bureau de la recette ce qui lui fut refusé', and elsewhere makes claims as to the couple's intentions: 'Nota que tout le procès n'a été intenté que par les artifices desdits Sourdéac et Champeron qui

⁵⁹ Dictionnaire biographique, p. 113.

voulaient se rendre maîtres de la recette et du contrôle' (I, 168). This is highly reminiscent of the situation which reigned at Perrin's Académie de Musique and which resulted in his downfall:

Sourdéac et Champeron, au dire formel de Perrin, recevaient eux-mêmes l'argent à la porte, tête nue, en bras de chemise et munis de petites balances pour vérifier le poids des louis d'or qu'ils mettaient en poche. Champeron le frère, l'ancien recors, les assistait et prêtait main-forte au besoin, tandis que le troisième Champeron, le moine de Saint-Benoît, introduisait les spectateurs et les plaçait dans la salle. Avec l'intention bien arrêtée de rendre tout apurement de comptes impossible, on s'explique qu'il ne soit resté aucune trace écrite des sommes encaissées.⁶⁰

'Portiers' and 'Gardes'

Chappuzeau describes the duties of the portiers thus:

Les Portiers, en pareil nombre que les Contrôleurs et aux mêmes postes, sont commis pour empêcher les désordres qui pourraient survenir, et pour cette fonction, avant les défenses étroites du Roi d'entrer sans payer on faisait choix d'un brave, mais qui d'ailleurs sut discerner les honnêtes gens d'avec ceux qui n'en portent pas la mine. Ils arrêtent ceux qui voudraient passer outre sans billet, et les avertissent d'en aller prendre au bureau; ce qu'ils font avec civilité, ayant ordre d'en user envers tout le monde pourvu qu'on ne vienne à aucune violence. (pp. 147-8)

He adds that the Hôtel de Bourgogne company has recently stopped employing portiers except at the entrance to the stage, preferring, as was now permitted, to use soldiers from the King's regiment of guards, and that, while retaining its portiers, the Guénégaud company, too, uses guards whenever necessary. His final remark on this subject is evidently intended to reassure people as to the safety with which they can now go to the theatre: 'C'est ainsi que tous les désordres ont été bannis, et que le bourgeois peut venir avec plus de plaisir à la comédie' (p. 148).

⁶⁰ Nutter and Thoinan, Origines, p. 173.

The disorders to which Chappuzeau refers came about as a direct result of people forcing entry to the theatre without paying, 'ce qui causait souvent à la porte et au parterre d'étranges désordres, qui dégoûtaient le bourgeois de la comédie.... La moitié du parterre était souvent remplie de gens incommodes, il en entraient aux loges, on voyait beaucoup de monde et fort peu d'argent' (p. 109). Such disturbances appear to have occurred frequently in 1672 and 1673.

On Sunday 9 October 1672, an incident occurred at the Palais-Royal while Molière himself was on stage. This was described by the singer Louis-Joseph Poussin:

... il vit jeter sur le théâtre pendant que quelques acteurs jouaient le gros bout d'une pipe à fumer, et à la fin de la comédie, il fut fait dans le parterre un grand bruit et désordre causés par gens de livrée, un desquels donna des coups de bâton à un particulier, et comme la rumeur était grande, Monsieur le procureur du Roi parut en robe sur le bord du théâtre, qui dit avec douceur: 'Pages, quittez vos bâtons et les mettez bas'.... Ils ne laissèrent pas de continuer leurs violences, ne tinrent aucun compte de ce qu'il leur dit ... et sur ce qu'une personne de qualité qui était sur ledit théâtre leur dit: 'Vous perdez le respect, vous parlez à votre juge', une voix d'entre eux répondit: 'Nous nous moquons des juges, nous n'avons point de juges'; enfin lui parlèrent avec beaucoup de mépris, et par leur moyen, il pensa arriver un très grand désordre, étant comme les maîtres dans ledit parterre....⁶¹

There must also have been disturbances at Lully's Académie Royale de Musique, for on 11 December 1672, La Reynie ordered that:

... ceux qui se trouveront à ses représentations n'y fassent aucun désordre, et qu'aucun de ceux à qui l'entrée en est défendue n'ait la témérité de s'y présenter. Nous conformément aux ordres de Sa Majesté avons fait et faisons très-expresses défenses à tous vagabonds et gens sans condition même à tous soldats, de se trouver aux environs du lieu où l'Académie de Musique est établie, les jours des représentations qui y seront données au public, à peine de prison; et à tous pages et laquais d'y faire ni exciter aucun bruit ni désordre, à peine de punition exemplaire et 200 livres.... Faisons pareillement défenses et sous les

⁶¹ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, pp. 536-7.

mêmes peines, à toute sorte de personnes de quelque condition qu'elles soient, de faire effort pour entrer dans le lieu de l'Académie; de porter aucunes armes à feu dans celui des représentations, d'y tirer l'épée, et d'y faire aucune insulte ou querelle à peine de la vie.⁶²

In January 1673, the Hôtel de Bourgogne was attacked by 'des personnages sans emploi, portant l'épée, qui ont en diverses occasions excité des désordres considérables en la ville.... Pour exécution de ce dessein ils se sont attroupés avec plusieurs vagabonds, étant armés de mousquetons, pistolets et épées devant la salle, forcèrent les portes de ce théâtre pendant la représentation de la comédie, qu'ils avaient fait cesser'. They committed 'de tels crimes contre toutes sortes de personnes, que chacun avait cherché par divers moyens de se sauver de ce lieu, où lesdits personnages se disposaient de mettre le feu et dans lequel avec une brutalité sans exemple ils maltraitaient indifféremment toutes sortes de gens'.⁶³

Shortly afterwards, on 9 January 1673, La Reynie issued orders 'pour la sûreté de ceux qui vont à la comédie', which expressly forbade 'à toutes sortes de personnes de qualité, condition et profession qu'elles soient, de s'y attrouper et de s'assembler au devant et aux environs des lieux où les comédies sont récitées et représentées, d'y porter aucune arme de feu, de faire effort pour y entrer, d'y tirer l'épée et de commettre aucune autre violence, ou d'exciter aucun tumulte'.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, just four days later the Palais-Royal parterre was invaded during a performance of Psyché by a number of 'gens d'épée':

⁶² Delamare, Traité, I, 473.

⁶³ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 147. There would appear to be an error of date here, with January 1672 having been substituted for January 1673.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 148.

... qui se seraient approchées dudit théâtre, lesquels murmuraient et frappaient du pied en terre; et quand la machine de Vénus est descendue, le choeur des chanteurs de cette entrée, récitant tous ensemble: 'Descendez, mère des amours', lesdits gens d'épée ... au nombre de vingt-cinq ou trente de complot, auraient troublé lesdits chanteurs par des hurlements, chansons dérisionnaires et frapements de pieds dans ledit parterre et contre les ais de l'enclos où sont les joueurs d'instruments, ce qui les aurait obligés de cesser, et ... les autres spectateurs étaient beaucoup alarmés de ce désordre.⁶⁵

It was as a result of these disturbances that, in Chappuzeau's words, 'Sa Majesté fit défenses expresses à toutes personnes de quelque qualité qu'elles puissent être, de se présenter à la porte sans argent, et permit aux comédiens de prendre des gardes pour s'oppser aux violences qu'on leur voudrait faire' (p. 109). Molière's troupe at the Palais-Royal hired guards from 30 September to 13 November 1672, and again from 15 January 1673 to the end of the season.⁶⁶

La Reynie's ordonnance of 23 June 1673, closing down the Marais theatre and giving permission for the actors from Molière's troupe to transfer to the Guénégaud, contains still more stringent measures to preserve public safety:

Défenses sont faites à tous vagabonds et gens sans aveu, même à tous soldats et autres personnes, de quelque condition qu'elles soient, de s'attrouper et de s'assembler au devant et ès environs du lieu où lesdites comédies et divertissements honnêtes seront représentés; d'y porter aucunes armes à feu, de faire effort pour y entrer, d'y tirer l'épée, et de commettre aucune autre violence, ou d'exciter aucun trouble, soit au dedans ou au dehors, à peine de la vie, et d'être procédé extraordinairement contre eux, comme perturbateurs de la sûreté et de la tranquillité publique: comme aussi défenses sont faites à tous pages et laquais de s'y attrouper, ni faire aucun bruit ni désordre, à peine de punition exemplaire, et de deux cents livres d'amende, au profit de l'Hôpital Général, dont les maîtres demeureront responsables et civilement tenus des désordres qui auront été faits ou causés par lesdits pages et laquais; et en cas de contravention, il est enjoint aux commissaires

⁶⁵ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, pp. 543-4.

⁶⁶ Chevalley, 'Etude critique', pp. 173-4.

du quartier de se transporter sur les lieux et aux bourgeois de leur prêter main-forte, même de nous informer sur-le-champ desdits désordres, afin qu'il y soit aussi, dès l'instant pourvu; et que ceux qui s'en trouveront être les auteurs ou complices, de quelque qualité et condition qu'ils soient, puissent être saisis et arrêtés, et leur procès fait et parfait selon la rigueur des ordonnances....⁶⁷

These measures appear to be the justification for Chappuzeau's reassurance that it is now safe to attend the theatre, and, indeed, seem to have had the required effect, for there is no record of any violent disturbance ever having occurred at the Guénégaud.

A further reassuring fact cited by Chappuzeau is, as we have seen, that in order to provide additional security, the Guénégaud company had taken to employing guards on a regular basis. The first Guénégaud Registre of 1673-4, like the 'Registre d'Hubert' for Molière's troupe for the previous season, has a separate heading under which payments to guards could be entered. From this we see that contrary to Chappuzeau's claim, no guards were employed at the Guénégaud for the first seventy-five performances there. The first time they are mentioned is on 29 December 1673, when 6 livres were paid to the 'gardes de covasseurs' (R I, 77). Guards began to be paid on a regular basis from 21 January 1674 onwards, receiving sums varying between 14 livres 10 sols and 30 livres, stabilizing at 16 livres per performance on 6 February 1674 (R I, 87-93). From 1674-5 onwards, the Guénégaud Registres have no separate heading under which to enter payments to guards. This would seem to indicate that, in line with Chappuzeau's assertion, guards were now being hired on a regular basis at every performance, with the cost being included in the frais ordinaires for that day. This was certainly the case in February 1675, when a statement of the frais ordinaires per performance included 5 livres 10 sols to an exempt and 1 livre 10 sols

⁶⁷ Chappuzeau, Théâtre français, p. 157.

each to three guards, thus giving a total payment on security of 10 livres (R II, 138 v°). The following month, the frais ordinaires for Circé included 'la garde 13 livres' (R II, 139 ff.), an additional two guards having presumably been hired to cope with the increased attendances.

The theatre guards were under the command of an exempt who wore a blue uniform and carried an ebony stick tipped with ivory. It was his duty to notify the public of the King's orders, attempt to quieten any disturbances and, if necessary, make arrests.⁶⁸ According to the anonymous pamphlet La Fameuse Comédienne, the exempt of the Guénégaud theatre guards was in 1676, Sébastien Aubry, the brother-in-law of Geneviève Béjart.⁶⁹ The author is mistaken, however, when he or she describes Mlle Molière's confidant, La Châteauneuf as 'femme du portier qui ouvre présentement les loges à l'Hôtel de Guénégaud'.⁷⁰ This description is doubly misleading for Châteauneuf was not a portier but an assistant, appearing at the Guénégaud in L'Ambigu comique, Pulchérie, Amphitryon, Le Comédien poète and Trigaudin (R I, 17, 20, 25, 30, 61, 92), and, as he was fatally wounded in April 1674,⁷¹ 'présentement' can hardly refer to the 1685 date of the earliest known edition of La Fameuse Comédienne. The only possible explanation is that Châteauneuf had a relative subsequently in the employment of the Comédie-

⁶⁸ Marc Chassaigne, La Lieutenance générale de police à Paris (Paris, 1906; reprinted Geneva, 1975), pp. 269-70.

⁶⁹ Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique, p. 18.

⁷⁰ Fameuse comédienne, p. 14. This error is reproduced by the author of the 'Note sur quelques comédiens', Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre, 1 (1948-9), pp. 272-5 (p. 273).

⁷¹ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 693.

Française.⁷² Bonnassies is , therefore, mistaken when he writes in his edition of the pamphlet that when the disturbances in the various Parisian theatres caused security measures to be intensified: 'les portiers furent remplacés par des soldats et employés autrement. Le mari de la Châteauneuf devint sans doute un des quatre ou cinq ouvriers de loges'. He compounds this error when criticizing Paul Lacroix: 'M. Lacroix double cette erreur d'une seconde, en écrivant "la Châteauneuf, femme du portier, qui ..."'. Cette ponctuation ferait croire que la Châteauneuf était ouvrière de loges: il n'y en avait point'.⁷³ In fact, there is no evidence to support the assertion that no women were employed as ouvriers de loges at the Guénégaud; and Mlle Châteauneuf did receive 2 livres for two days' work on 5 June 1674 (R II, 26) - the same daily salary as for an ouvrier de loges (R II, 138 v°). What is more, the statement of frais ordinaires drawn up in February 1675 contains, as we have seen, payments to an exempt and three guards, yet, in contradiction of Bonnassies's claim that these had replaced portiers, it also contains payments to two of the latter, thus reinforcing Chappuzeau's assertion that, unlike the Hôtel de Bourgogne, the Guénégaud employed guards alongside its portiers.

⁷² Châteauneuf had been associated with Molière's troupe ten years prior to the opening of the Guénégaud, being mentioned in the Premier Registre de La Thorillière of 1663-4 (p. 52). He received 3 livres per performance, as is known from La Grange's comment in his Registre of August 1672:

N^a que j'ai eu contestation depuis Pâques avec la troupe, sur ce qu'elle voulait que je payasse 3 livres, chaque jour de représentation, sur la demie part de ma femme, à Châteauneuf gagiste de la troupe; ce que je n'ai voulu consentir jusqu'à ce jourd'hui que pour terminer tous différends et entretenir paix et amitié dans la troupe. J'ai acquiescé à la pluralité.
(I, 126)

⁷³ Fameuse comédienne, pp. xvii-xviii.

The two portiers employed by the Guénégaud in 1675 were 'M. Duchemin qui est à la porte du parterre' who received 1 livre 10 sols per performance, and Subtil who received 2 livres 5 sols (R II, 138 v°).⁷⁴ Shortly afterwards, the number of portiers employed by the Guénégaud company appears to have been reduced, for in the list of frais ordinaires for Circé, for which two extra guards were hired, we find no reference to M. Duchemin, and only a 2 livres 5 sols payment to Subtil (R II, 139 ff.). Subtil's duties did not extend to performances alone; he was regularly called upon to make trips or 'voyages' on behalf of the company, and during preparations for Circé, received 9 livres 'pour avoir gardé la porte pendant les répétitions' (R II, 147 v°). Furthermore, it was a common practice among noble patrons of the theatre to delay paying for their tickets until some time after the performance they had attended, and another of Subtil's duties was the collection of these outstanding sums.

According to Sylvie Chevalley, Romain Toubel was also at some time a portier at the Guénégaud theatre.⁷⁵ The Toubels were a large theatrical family, and, although several of them are mentioned in the Registres, there is no reference to one of them having specifically occupied this position. One of the portiers employed by Molière's troupe at the Palais-Royal was Des Barres.⁷⁶ Although this person continued to be employed at the Guénégaud along with his wife, it would appear to have been as a stage-hand rather than in his original capacity.

⁷⁴ The former could be the Charles Duchemin who in November 1671 was 'portier du jardin et palais des Tuileries' when his marriage to Jeanne Lefèvre was witnessed by his friend Louis Béjart (Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 656).

⁷⁵ Chevalley, 'Etude critique', p. 193.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 189.

'Ouvreurs de loges, de théâtre et d'amphithéâtre'

According to Chappuzeau, 'Les Ouvreurs de loges, de théâtre et d'amphithéâtre, au nombre de quatre ou cinq, doivent être prompts à servir le monde, et donner aux gens de qualité les meilleures places qu'il leur est possible, comme ils en reçoivent aussi quelques douceurs, ce qui ne leur est pas défendu' (p. 149). There were, in fact, six such employees at the Guénégaud at the time of the production of Circé, each receiving 20 sols per performance (R II, 139 ff.). More details are given in the statement of frais ordinaires drawn up in February 1675. This includes payments of 5 livres 'pour quatre ouvreurs de loges et celui qui ouvre le théâtre chacun 20 sols', and 2 livres 'pour le sieur Barbier qui ouvre l'amphithéâtre et fournit le théâtre de tapisserie et de chaises' (R II, 138 v°). This does not mean to say, however, that Barbier had lost his position with the company in the intervening period, for, in addition to the payment of 20 sols to each ouvreur, the frais ordinaires for Circé also include 2 livres for 'port de lampes et tapisserie' to an unspecified individual (R II, 139 ff.).

A 'sieur Barbier' whose association with Molière is known is the author's first cousin, Claude Barbier, described in his marriage contract of 1661 as 'tapissier sous les piliers des Halles'.⁷⁷ As we have seen, it was a M. Barbier who upholstered the benches in the Guénégaud's salle commune (R VII, 81). The duties of the Barbier employed by the Guénégaud company, however, far exceeded simply providing tapestry and other goods. He was employed in some unknown capacity during rehearsals of Circé, receiving 6 livres for six days work. At the same time he put up posters for the company, receiving 12 livres 'pour avoir affiché six jours'. It gives us some idea of the man's status that his manservant was also paid by the company, receiving

⁷⁷ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 620.

2 livres (R II, 139 ff.), and a further indication of the esteem in which he was held by the troupe is that in January 1676 he was given 22 livres 3 sols in 'étrennes', and in January 1677 a further 22 livres (R III, 114; IV, 115). It is somewhat surprising, therefore, to see that a Claude Barbier appeared as a 'moyen voleur' in Circé, and that 'le petit Barbier', presumably his son, also played a rôle in this production (R II, 139 ff.).⁷⁸

'Afficheur' and 'Imprimeur'

Barbier is the only individual whose name we find associated with the putting up of posters for the Guénégaud theatre. Of the afficheur Chappuzeau writes: '<il> doit être ponctuel à afficher à tous les carrefours et lieux nécessaires qui lui sont marqués' (p. 150). The posters were positioned at various crossroads and intersections around the city,⁷⁹ and the right to display them was awarded to the Guénégaud company by the terms of the ordonnance allowing the remaining actors from Molière's troupe to transfer there, 'comme aussi de faire afficher aux coins des rues et carrefours de cette ville et faubourgs, pour servir d'avertissement des jours et sujets des représentations'.⁸⁰

As we have seen, the composition of the affiche was, according to Chappuzeau, one of the duties of the Orateur: 'L'affiche suit l'annonce et est de même nature. Elle entretient le lecteur de la nombreuse assemblée du jour précédent, du mérite de la pièce qui doit suivre, et de la nécessité de pourvoir aux loges de bonne heure, surtout lorsque la pièce est nouvelle, et que le grand monde y court' (pp. 140-1). Once

⁷⁸ Mme Barbier was also associated with the Guénégaud company, receiving 2 livres 11 sols on 14 August 1674 (R II, 56).

⁷⁹ François de Dainville, 'Les lieux d'affichage des comédiens à Paris en 1753', Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre, 3 (1951), pp. 248-55 (p. 248).

⁸⁰ Chappuzeau, Théâtre français, pp. 156-7.

written, the text of the poster would be sent to the printer, who would deliver the printed versions very early the following morning: 'L'Imprimeur doit rendre le lendemain du jour qu'on a annoncé et de grand matin, le nombre ordinaire d'affiches bien imprimées sur de bon papier, l'^aoriginal lui en ayant été envoyé dès le soir par celui qui annonce, et qui a accoutumé de les dresser' (p. 150). The punctuality of both the imprimeur and the afficheur so emphasized by Chappuzeau, was of vital importance because, with the exception of the first runs of successful plays and significant revivals, a company would rarely give the same work at more than two or three consecutive performances, and performing on alternate days as they did, this allowed very little time between the annonce and the performance for publicity.⁸¹

The posters were colour coded: red for the Hôtel de Bourgogne, yellow for the Opéra and green for the Guénégaud.⁸² Black posters were used to announce the cancellation of a performance, whether due to the observance of a religious holiday or more unhappy or unusual circumstances. Thus, the entry on 10 August 1674: 'L'on n'a point joué à cause du rhume de M. de Rosimond', is closely followed on 12 August by the payment of 4 livres 6 sols 'pour une affiche noire extraordinaire' (R II, 55-6). Elsewhere we find a curious entry relating to the 'peinture verte d'une affiche' (R II, 146 v^o) - presumably an occasion when the company had thought that they would be unable to perform but happily succeeded in doing so.

Two exceptional days on which the Guénégaud company did not perform were those of the execution of Mme de Brinvilliers on 17 July

⁸¹ At the Guénégaud theatre, the French company performed on the jours ordinaires (Tuesday, Friday and Sunday), and the Italians on the remaining jours extraordinaires (Chappuzeau, Théâtre français, p. 70).

⁸² Chappuzeau, Théâtre français, p. 150.

1676 and of the entry of the Spanish Ambassador into Paris on 11 July 1679 - evidently both occasions when they felt unequal to competing for their audience (R IV, 39; VI, 26). The troupe would also cease performances to allow for the technical rehearsal on stage of complex machine plays. According to the statement of the frais ordinaires for each performance day at the Guénégaud set down in February 1675, the daily cost for the printing of posters and their being put up was 9 livres 16 sols (R II, 138 v°).

In addition to the posters, the imprimeur also provided the company with tickets and its seasonal account book, as well as at the time of Circé '1,300 numéros' (R II, 146 v°), possibly supplementary tickets relating to seating positions. Other items provided by the printer were 'almanachs' - souvenir calendars illustrating and, therefore, publicizing a given production. The best known of these are the two different versions of the 'Almanach de La Devineresse' of 1680.⁸³ A third, also relating to a production at the Guénégaud, is the Malade imaginaire almanach also of 1680.⁸⁴ That the Guénégaud company distributed almanachs in earlier seasons is known from a reference in the Registres dated 9 January 1678 to a payment of 11 livres 'à l'imprimeur pour les almanachs' (R V, 105). We do not know, however, which production these were designed to publicize.

The main printer dealt with by the Guénégaud company was from 1677 to 1681, Guillaume Adam whose business was located on the Quai des Augustins. This is known from the fact that the Registres covering those years contain a title page bearing his name. He is probably also the M. Adam who on 5 May 1675 received 3 livres 15 sols 6 deniers from the

⁸³ Elfrieda T. Dubois, David W. Maskell and P.J. Yarrow, 'L'Almanach de La Devineresse', Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre, 32 (1980), pp. 216-9.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 219.

company (R III, 6). Another printer with whom the Guénégaud troupe dealt during the first season of its existence was M. Baudry, who on 19 December 1673 received 4 livres 'pour le registre, des billets et de la cire' (R I, 74).

Décorateurs

Chappuzeau describes the duties of the décorateurs as follows:

Les Décorateurs doivent être gens d'esprit, et avoir de l'adresse pour les enjoliments du théâtre. Ils sont ordinairement deux, et toujours ensemble pour les choses nécessaires, et lorsqu'il s'agit de travailler à de nouvelles décorations; mais pour l'ordinaire il n'y en a qu'un les jours que l'on représente, et ils ont le service alternatif. Tout ce qui regarde l'embellissement du théâtre dépend de leur fonction; et il est nécessaire qu'ils entendent les machines pour les faire jouer dans les pièces qui en sont accompagnées, quand le machiniste les a mises en état. Il est de leur fonction de faire retirer d'entre les ailes du théâtre de certaines petites gens qui s'y viennent fourrer, et qui, outre l'embarras qu'elles causent aux comédiens dans les entrées et les sorties donnent une méchante figure au théâtre, et blessent la vue des auditeurs.... (p. 148)

As we have seen, it was generally also one of the duties of the décorateurs to arrange for the trimming and snuffing of the candles on the stage chandeliers. Usually they were allowed to benefit from the proceeds of selling back any remaining stumps to the candlemaker, but at the Guénégaud this perquisite was enjoyed by the two machinistes, Sourdéac and Champeron. One of the chief preoccupations of the décorateurs was fire prevention, as Chappuzeau describes:

L'un mouche le devant du théâtre, et l'autre le fond, et surtout ils ont l'oeil que le feu ne prenne aux toiles. Pour prévenir cet accident, on a soin de tenir toujours des muids pleins d'eau, et nombre de seaux, comme l'on voit dans les places publiques des villes bien policées, sans attendre le mal pour courir à la rivière ou aux puits. (p. 149)

This is understandable given that the theatre building as well as its fixtures and fittings and stage decorations were all constructed of

highly inflammable materials and lit entirely by naked flame. This concern was yet another reason for the Guénégaud company taking legal action against the Italian troupe in 1679, when it accused the Italians of the following offence:

... ils ont <mis un feu d'artifice à une pièce intitulée Le Baron de Foeneste> ... où il y a un feu d'artifice composé de fusée à pétard, saucissons et autres choses fort dangereuses dans un lieu où tout est construit de bois de sapin, de toiles peintes et autres matières très combustibles, qui est contre l'usage des théâtres à cause des accidents qui en peuvent arriver.⁸⁵

The author goes on to describe the anxiety this action on the part of the Italians has caused the French actors: 'ils appréhendent le feu à tout moment, et se voient à la veille de leur entière ruine par la méchante conduite ou la malice des Italiens'.⁸⁶

We know that the Guénégaud was equipped with the water-barrels and buckets described by Chappuzeau, for throughout the Registres we find references to payments made either to the company's general factotum, Le Breton or to the two décorateurs 'pour avoir rempli les tonneaux' or 'pour avoir vidé et rempli des muids' (e.g. R III, 33, 73). After the performance was over, it was, in Chappuzeau's words, the responsibility of the concierge, Dufors, 'de visiter exactement partout, de peur d'accident du feu' (p. 145). In addition, however, the company took care to support the order of Capuchins, the nearest thing to a professional fire-fighting service to be found in seventeenth-century Paris; for in

⁸⁵ Dossier Les Italiens. The section of this document giving the title of the play in question has been crossed out but is still legible. In fact, according to the frères Parfaict, Le Baron de Foeneste had first been performed some five years previously in January 1674 (Ancien Théâtre italien, p. 420). The device would presumably have been used in Act II when Arlequin and Eularia enter a besieged fort under fire (Ibid., p. 428). A 'saucisson' was a powder hose.

⁸⁶ Dossier Les Italiens.

February 1675, the frais ordinaires include 1 livre 10 sols 'pour les charités que l'on donne aux trois compagnies des pères capucins, des pères de la charité et les picpuses' (R II, 138 v^o).⁸⁷

In describing the way in which the two décorateurs would snuff the stage candles, with one working at the front and the other at the rear, Chappuzeau would seem to contradict his own statement that only one décorateur was required to be present at a performance. What is more, we see from the Guénégaud Registres that the frais ordinaires for each performance included 'pour deux décorateurs chacun 30 sols' (R II, 138 v^o). It is also interesting to note that the décorateurs frequently took advantage of days on which the company did not perform, either on account of religious holidays or for other reasons, to work on the preparation of décors. Thus we frequently find in the Registres such references as 'décorateurs pour le mardi qu'on n'a point joué ... 3 livres' (R IV, 59).

The two décorateurs employed by the Guénégaud company were Dubreuil and Crosnier. In fact, there were several people bearing the latter name associated with the Guénégaud at one time or another, with Crosnier, Crosnier père, 'le vieux Crosnier', 'le gros Crosnier', Crosnier l'aîné and Crosnier le cadet all being mentioned in the Registres, as well as Mme Crosnier, 'la Crosnier', 'la femme de Crosnier l'aîné' and 'la veuve Crosnier'. Members of the Crosnier family, already qualified as 'décorateurs', had been associated with Molière's troupe from as early as 1662,⁸⁸ and the name reappears frequently in the two La Thorillière Registres and that of Hubert. These included Jean Crosnier and his younger brother Jacques, who later became an actor and is better

⁸⁷ See Molière, Oeuvres complètes, edited by Robert Jouanny, 2 vols (Paris, 1962), I, 707; Madame de Sévigné, Lettres choisies, edited by Emile Feuillatre (Paris, 1971), p. 53.

⁸⁸ La Grange, Registre, I, 47.

known under his stage-name of Du Perche. According to Mongrédien and Robert they were 'garçons de théâtre' at the Palais-Royal from 1662-7, and Jean Crosnier in his marriage contract of 1672 describes himself as a 'décorateur au théâtre du Palais-Royal'.⁸⁹ Moreover, the name 'Jean Cronir' is inscribed on the reverse of the cover of the 'Registre d'Hubert'.⁹⁰ Sylvie Chevalley has, however, suggested that the Crosniers at the Palais-Royal might have been father and son,⁹¹ and the twenty-one references in the Guénégaud Registres to Crosnier père, plus the two to 'le vieux Crosnier' would seem to bear this out. What is more, since there is only one reference to Crosnier le cadet, when he received 15 sols for assisting with the production of Montauban's Panurge in August 1674 (R II, 50 v°), it would appear that this was the only time that he was recruited by the Guénégaud company, and that the Crosniers most usually employed were his father and elder brother. It would not be incompatible with what we know of Du Perche's career (that he was in Orleans in January 1674, and a member of the Troupe du Dauphin in March 1676)⁹² for him to have been present in Paris in August 1674. A further link between Du Perche and the Guénégaud company is that his wife received a charitable payment of 3 livres on 6 February 1674 (R I, 93).

Jean Crosnier, the brother of Du Perche, went on to have a somewhat infamous career. In April 1679, Colbert gave the Intendant de Rouen orders to have him arrested for abduction and murder. He had been present in Rouen with his brother in Spring 1678, but had already fled to Holland when the order to arrest him arrived. In a letter from the Intendant to Colbert, Jean Crosnier is described as a former 'clerc au

⁸⁹ Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique, p. 64, 87.

⁹⁰ Chevalley, 'Etude critique', p. 189.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique, p. 87.

Châtelet ou solliciteur d'affaires', suggesting that he had abandoned the theatre at some time between 1672 and 1678. In Holland, Crosnier published several plays including L'Ombre de son rival (1681), Les Frayeurs de Crispin (1682), L'Epouse fugitive (1682), and a gazette, Le Mercure burlesque (1682). Returning to France, he was arrested for 'maléfices et avortements'. He entered the Bastille in March 1687 and, after having been transferred to a variety of prisons, was condemned to the galleys on 7 November 1701. He was, however, transferred to Vincennes just ten days later where he died in October 1709.⁹³

A great deal of the above is clearly incompatible with what we know of the Crosniers employed by the Guénégaud company, not least in that, while Jean Crosnier the author was absent from Paris from Spring 1678 onwards, the Registres contain no fewer than nine references to payments to Crosnier l'aîné between February 1678 and July 1679, twelve to an unspecified Crosnier between January 1678 and June 1680, as well as innumerable mentions of unnamed décorateurs. This makes it impossible for us to identify Jean Crosnier with those employed by the Guénégaud company. Casimir Zdanowicz, in an article on the author, claims to having found nothing to link him with either the décorateurs at the Palais-Royal or Du Perche.⁹⁴ The letter from the Intendant de Rouen to Colbert, however, specifically states that Jean Crosnier 'a été ici jusqu'à la fin de juin, avec son frère nommé Du Perche, comédien'.⁹⁵ Could one suppose Du Perche to have had another brother who was also a décorateur at the Guénégaud? This is quite possible, for, although in the above letter it is stated that 'ce Du Perche a un autre frère

⁹³ Ibid., pp. 64-5.

4 ⁹⁴ Casimir D. Zdanowicz, 'Jean Crosnier', Modern Language Notes, 57 (April 1942), pp. 245-52 (p. 246).

⁹⁵ 'Les dynasties théâtrales: les Crosnier', Revue d'Histoire du Théâtre, 5 (1953), pp. 289-90 (p. 289).

demeurant à Londres, qui s'est marié pour la seconde fois et qui montre à danser',⁹⁶ so that one might wonder why, if a third brother existed, he too is not mentioned; this letter is merely a résumé of hearsay information gleaned by the Intendant in conversation with an unnamed actor, and is unlikely to be comprehensive. I would suggest, therefore, that there were four members of the Crosnier family associated with the Palais-Royal and subsequently the Guénégaud at different times: a father and his three sons, of which two were Jean and Jacques, alias Du Perche.

As for the Crosniers employed at the Guénégaud theatre, for the greater part of the time there were only two: Crosnier the décorateur and his father, distinguished from his son in the Registres by the addition of such titles as 'le vieux', 'le gros', 'l'aîné', or, more accurately, 'le père'. This identification of Crosnier l'aîné and Crosnier père as one and the same person is possible in that in the Registres, although we find separate payments on the same day to décorateurs and to Crosnier l'aîné (R II, 11 v^o; V, 56 v^o; VI, 48 v^o), décorateurs and Crosnier père (R II, 139 ff.; III, 100 v^o), and even to Crosnier and Crosnier père (R III, 132), on no occasion do we find simultaneous payments to décorateurs and Crosnier or to Crosnier l'aîné and Crosnier père. Nevertheless, the duties of the two Crosniers would appear to have been largely similar, with both acting as labourers and handimen as well as scene-painters as required, with the single distinction that Crosnier père also appeared as an assistant when necessary. It is in the latter capacity that the two titles of Crosnier l'aîné and Crosnier père can most clearly be seen to refer to a single individual. For example, Crosnier père received 15 sols for appearing as an assistant in Tartuffe on 10 and 15 March 1676 and Les Femmes savantes on 13 March 1676, and Crosnier l'aîné received the same amount at the

⁹⁶ Ibid.

time of a performance of Tartuffe on 14 April 1676 and Les Femmes savantes on 16 December 1678 (R III, 140-2; IV, 1; VI, 122). It seems clear, therefore, that the titles refer to a single person and were used interchangeably depending upon whoever was writing up the Registre each day.

A similar confusion exists concerning the female members of the Crosnier family. In the Registres we find references to Mme Crosnier, 'la Crosnier', 'la femme de Crosnier l'aîné', and even to 'la veuve Crosnier'. As we have seen, it was a common practice for the wives of company employees to play a part in the running of the theatre. Mme Crosnier appears to have had a particular responsibility for furnishing the troupe with wood, being paid for doing so on 5 December 1673 and in March 1674 (R I, 69; II, 142 v°). It is probable that this was the wife of the décorateur, since a reference to the payment of 7 livres 'pour le feu à Crosnier' on 24 March 1674 is closely followed on the reverse of the same sheet by the entry: 'plus payé à la femme de Crosnier qui a fourni le bois ... 22 livres' (R II, 142 and v°). Thierry, in his Documents sur 'Le Malade imaginaire', refers to the fact that in the prologue to Le Grondeur by Palaprat and De Bruys of 1691, the name of the 'maîtresse ouvreuse' is Crosnier. He believes this to be a reference to the mother of the décorateur Crosnier.⁹⁷ She would, therefore, be the wife of Crosnier l'aîné.

There are two references in the Registres to the wife of Crosnier l'aîné, on 22 November 1678 and 6 August 1679 (R VI, 112; VII, 49). These are followed on 14 May 1680 by a mention of 'la veuve Crosnier' (R VIII, 7). The last reference in the Registres to Crosnier l'aîné occurs on 23 July 1679 (R VII, 43). There is, however, one reference to Crosnier after that to 'la veuve', on 22 June 1680, as well as one to

⁹⁷ Thierry, Documents, pp. 168-9.

'la Crosnier' on 1 July 1680 (R VIII, 42, 51). We cannot, however, conclude that it was the elder of the two Crosniers who died, since whereas throughout the Registres the payment is recorded of the wages 'du concierge et des décorateurs', on 10 June 1680, shortly after the payment to 'la veuve Crosnier', we find for the first time a reference to the 'journées du concierge et décorateur' in the singular (R VIII, 31). It would seem, therefore, that it was the Crosnier employed as a décorateur who died, rather than his father, and that this death occurred between 4 February and 14 May 1680. In which case, the payments to Crosnier on 22 June 1680 and to la Crosnier on 1 July 1680, must be explained by the fact that it was no longer necessary to distinguish between the two men and their wives in the Registres.

Our conclusion that it was the décorateur who died is found confirmed in another document. 'La veuve Crosnier' did not, in fact, remain a widow for long. On 22 May 1681, all the members of the Comédie-Française troupe were signatories to the contract at the remarriage of the widow of Gilles Crosnier, 'peintre décorateur', resident in the rue Mazarine.⁹⁸ This, therefore, enables us to identify the décorateur of the Guénégaud Registres, and possibly, the third of the Crosnier brothers.

One final note on the elder Crosnier is that he is, as we have seen, referred to on one occasion in the Guénégaud Registres as 'le gros Crosnier' (2 January 1678, R V, 102). This was a characteristic exploited for its comic effect by the Guénégaud company's co-tenants, for, in addition to appearing as an assistant with the former troupe, Crosnier père also participated in at least one production with the Italians. The play in question was Le Baron de Foeneste, in Act II of which, according to the frères Parfaict, during the siege of a fort,

⁹⁸ Jurgens and Fleury, Documents, p. 118.

'Arlequin obligé d'y être présent, prend Crogne et le met devant lui: c'est dit-il, parce que tu es de taille à me servir de parapet, et que tu rempliras mieux les fossés', adding in a note that Crogne 'est le nom d'un gagiste de la comédie qui était fort gros'.⁹⁹ Similarly, in Act IV, Crosnier played a cobbler's apprentice of whom Arlequin asks: 'Quel est donc ce petit mignon-là?', before kicking him in the stomach.¹⁰⁰

Payments to Dubreuil and the two Crosniers give interesting insights into the preparation of properties, costumes and scenic elements for the Guénégaud productions. For example, for Amphitryon, on 12 June 1676, 1 livre 10 sols was paid to Crosnier père 'pour avoir peint l'aigle'; on 3 November 1676, Crosnier received 14 livres 10 sols for having 'barbouillé l'aigle'; on 21 June 1677, he was paid 2 livres 5 sols 'pour avoir raccommode l'aigle et les nuages'; and on 17 March 1679, he received 1 livre 10 sols 'pour avoir peint les chevaux de La Nuit' (R IV, 25, 81; V, 20; VI, 160). Other properties required for Molière's plays included 'la chaise du Malade imaginaire', for having 'barbouillé' which Crosnier l'aîné received 4 livres on 12 December 1677; , and 'le tableau du Sicilien' for which Crosnier was paid 1 livre 10 sols on 25 June 1679 (R V, 94; VII, 31). Dubreuil appears to have had a particular responsibility for the hiring of supplementary costumes: on three occasions he was reimbursed for the hire of a lawyer's robe to be used in Rosimond's petite pièce, L'Avocat sans étude (27 September 1676, 15 and 20 June 1677; R IV, 66; V, 18, 20), and once for a doctor's robe to be worn in Thomas Corneille's verse

⁹⁹ Parfaict, Ancien Théâtre italien, p. 428.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 430. Crosnier was not the only Guénégaud employee to also perform with the Italian company: during the Act V masque in Le Baron de Foeneste, 'La Montagne (gagiste) vêtu en Polichinelle, danse avec Lefèvre (autre gagiste) habillé en nourrice' (Ibid., p. 432); and this was a two-way exchange, for 'Lefèvre des Italiens' performed as an assistant in Le Malade imaginaire and as a marcheur in Circé (R II, 13 v°, 139 ff.).

adaptation of Molière's Dom Juan, Le Festin de pierre (2 March 1677, R IV, 131).

The décorateurs also worked on the general maintenance of the theatre building and workshops. The following are typical of payments for this type of work received by Crosnier, Crosnier père and Dubreuil: 5 livres 14 sols to Crosnier père in April 1675 'pour reblanchir les murailles de la maison du collège que les peintres ont occupée pour la troupe' and 7 livres 10 sols to Crosnier 'pour avoir blanchi des murs', 1 livre 4 sols to Crosnier on 9 July 1675 'pour des chaises', 4 livres 10 sols to Dubreuil on 12 July 1675 'pour les bancs du parterre', 23 livres 1 sol to Crosnier on 13 December 1675 'pour avoir peint la loge de Mlle de Molière', and a total of 16 livres 10 sols to Dubreuil in January 1676 'pour ses planchers' (R II, 148 v°; III, 3, 34-5, 104, 118-20); 1 livre to Crosnier on 15 May 1676 'pour la moitié du raccommodage du banc pour le bureau', 15 sols to Dubreuil on 24 January 1677 'pour la loge de Monsieur', and 15 sols to Crosnier l'aîné on 17 February 1677 'pour avoir travaillé au théâtre' (R IV, 14, 116, 121); 5 sols to Crosnier on 25 January 1678 'pour nettoyer des neiges', 12 sols to Crosnier l'aîné on 13 February 'pour avoir vidé les caves', and 17 sols to Crosnier on 14 July 1679 'pour avoir vidé des ordures' (R V, 110, 120; VII, 39).

Assistants

The assistants were individuals who took small, speaking or non-speaking parts in productions, but who were not shareholding members of the company and so were paid per performance. Chappuzeau writes of them: 'Les Assistants sont ordinairement quelques domestiques des comédiens, à qui l'on donne ce que l'on juge à propos le jour qu'ils sont employés. Dans les pièces de machines il y en a un grand nombre; et ce sont des frais extraordinaires qu'on ne saurait limiter' (p. 149). At the

Guénégaud the assistants were not usually the actors' servants, although La Grange's valet did perform on several occasions, for example receiving 4 livres 10 sols 'pour six représentations de L'Inconnu' on 10 February 1679 (R VI, 145). Instead, the troupe preferred to call upon the services of relatives of company members or other theatre members and associates.¹⁰¹ The vast majority of plays performed at the Guénégaud required only a few assistants, and payments to them were frequently entered in the Registres with either the name of the actor not being specified, or else under the name of the character played. Thus, the cost of the costume for Louison in Le Malade imaginaire is itemized in May 1674, and it is recorded that she received 12 livres 'pour quatre journées'; La Merluche, Brindavoine and Dame Claude each received 1 livre for a performance of L'Avare in June 1675; and the Registres abound with references to payments to Philippotte from Tartuffe (R I, 53; II, 12 v^o, 16; III, 31). It is, however, occasionally possible to determine which assistant would have played which rôle. For example, Châteauneuf is thought to have played the Exempt in Tartuffe,¹⁰² a part which appears to have been taken over by Crosnier père on the former's death (R III, 142). As Chappuzeau suggests, the services of a considerable number of assistants were required for machine plays: both 'voleurs' who appeared in aerial displays or on machines suspended above the stage, and 'marcheurs' or dancers. In addition, expenses were swelled for machine plays by the hiring of a considerable number of supplementary stagehands.

¹⁰¹ See Appendix One: 'The Guénégaud troupe, its employees and associates'.

¹⁰² Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 693.

Chandelier

The final 'bas officier' described by Chappuzeau is the chandelier, of whom he writes:

Le Chandelier doit fournir de bonnes lumières, du poids et de la longueur et grosseur qu'elles sont commandées. Il faut que la blancheur suive, et que la matière qu'il y emploie n'ait aucun défaut. Je ne parle point des lumières extraordinaires, parce qu'on n'en peut fixer la quantité, non plus que le temps qu'on les doit employer. Quand le Roi vient voir les comédiens, ce sont ses officiers qui fournissent les bougies. (pp. 149-50)

As might be expected, the Guénégaud Registres are full of references to payments to the chandelier, especially as lighting was required not only for performances, but also for rehearsals and for the use of the décorateurs and other workmen labouring on the construction of the décors.

The tradesman most frequently used by the Guénégaud company in this respect was the maître chandelier Mécard, whose business was conveniently situated in the rue Guénégaud, and in whose house Louis Béjard died in October 1678.¹⁰³ It is not the name of Mécard which appears most frequently in the Registres, however, but that of his wife, who, as we have seen, appears in 1678-9 to have taken over from the concierge Dufors as the Trésorier's assistant, regularly receiving sums from the troupe for the payment of workmen and other 'bas officiers'.¹⁰⁴

Balayeur

Chappuzeau adds that one more individual was employed by each theatre company: 'Il y a aussi un homme établi pour tenir nette la place devant la porte de chaque Hôtel' (p. 150). At the Guénégaud, this person

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 667.

¹⁰⁴ The chandelière's name appears in the Guénégaud Registres in a variety of different spellings, of which the most common are Mécard and Maincar.

received 5 sols per performance (R II, 138 v^o). It is probable that this was one of the many duties of the Guénégaud theatre's labourer, Le Breton, who was frequently paid for cleaning work (e.g. R II, 89).

FRAIS ORDINAIRES

To summarize, there follows the statement of the frais ordinaires for each performance at the Guénégaud in February 1675. These would, no doubt, have been liable to some minor alterations at different periods in the theatre's activity. It should be noted, however, that they only concern permanent backstage and front-of-house staff. For more elaborate productions and machine plays, the frais ordinaires as well as the frais extraordinaires would have been considerably more.

Etat des frais ordinaires de chaque jour de représentaton de comédie réglé ce jourd'hui le 26^e février 1675

Premièrement, pour un exempt 110 sols, pour trois gardes	
4 livres 10 sols, en tout 10 livres	10 ^s
Plus, pour Mlle Hubert, 3 livres pour charge des billets	3 ^s
Plus, pour Mme Provost qui fait la recette au bureau, 3 livres ..	3 ^s
Pour Subtil, portier, 45 sols	2 ^s 10 ^s
Pour M. Duchemin qui est à la porte du parterre, 30 sols	1 ^s 10 ^s
Pour deux contrôleurs que la troupe a accordés MM. de Sourdéac et de Champeron pour recevoir les billets l'un à la porte des loges et l'autre à celle du parterre, 30 sols chacun	3 ^s
Pour quatre ouvreurs de loges et celui qui ouvre le théâtre, chacun 20 sols	5 ^s
Pour le sieur Barbier qui ouvre l'amphithéâtre et fournit le théâtre de tapisserie et chaises, deux livres	2 ^s
Pour six violons, 30 sols à chacun	9 ^s
Pour deux décorateurs, chacun 30 sols	3 ^s
Pour le Concierge, 30 sols	1 ^s 10 ^s
Pour la chandelle, montant à 32 livres de poids à raison de 7 sols la livre	11 ^s 4 ^s
Pour les affiches et afficheur, 9 livres 16 sols	9 ^s 16 ^s
Pour les lampes, 20 sols	1 ^s
Pour balayer partout, 5 sols	5 ^s
Pour les charités que l'on donne aux trois compagnies des pères capucines, les pères de la charité et les piquepuces, 30 sols	1 ^s 10 ^s
Somme totale desdits frais ordinaires ci-dessus, 67 livres	67 ^s

(R II, 138 v^o)

CHAPTER FOUR - PRODUCTION

Having discussed the administration of the Guénégaud theatre and the various categories of people employed there, we will now consider the way in which plays were selected and produced.

PLAY SELECTION

Chappuzeau in Le Théâtre français provides us with a step-by-step account of how this was done. An author with a new play he wished to have performed would first present it to an actor of his choice, who would then decide whether to suggest it to the troupe to which he belonged or reject it out of hand. In line with his general panegyric of the acting profession, Chappuzeau maintains that actors are the best judges of whether or not a play will succeed, especially as so many of them are themselves authors - five in the Troupe Royale at the Hôtel de Bourgogne at his time of writing - adding, not surprisingly, that it was to a company's advantage to have such 'comédiens-poètes' in its ranks (pp. 63-4). The five individuals to whom Chappuzeau refers were, presumably, Raymond Poisson, Hauteroche, Brécourt, Champmeslé and La Thuillerie.¹ Unfortunately, the Guénégaud troupe was not so well provided for in this respect, for, having lost the greatest 'comédien poète' of the century in the person of Molière, the new company had only Rosimond as a replacement, whose petites pièces L'Avocat sans étude, and Le Volontaire were performed in 1675-6, and La Dupe amoureuse in 1678-9, and of which only Le Volontaire was a première. In 1678-9, Rosimond was joined at the Guénégaud by another actor-dramatist, Champmeslé, who had one if not two new works performed there: La Bassette and Les Carosses

¹ Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique, p. 210. The works presented under La Thuillerie's name, were, however, actually by Abeille (Ibid., p. 131).

d'Orléans both in 1680-1.² Interestingly, the first première given at the Guénégaud in its opening season was Le Comédien poète by Montfleury and Thomas Corneille. The 'Suite du Prologue' of Le Comédien poète contains an apologia of such authors: 'une pièce d'un comédien de bon sens en peut quelquefois bien valoir une de ces Messieurs les auteurs dont la cervelle est bien souvent démontée'.³

If the actor to whom an author submitted his play rejected it, it was useless for the latter to proceed further. If, on the other hand, opinion was favourable, the author would inform the rest of the troupe, either himself or by means of an intermediary, that he had a play he wished to read to them. Then, in Chappuzeau's words: 'Sur cet avis on prend jour et heure, on s'assemble ou au théâtre, ou en un autre lieu, et l'auteur, sans prélude ni réflexion (ce que les comédiens ne veulent point), lit sa pièce avec le plus d'emphase qu'il peut' (pp. 64-5). In the intervals between the acts, while the author was resting, the actors would comment on 'ce qu'ils ont remarqué de fâcheux, ou trop de longueur, ou un couplet languissant, ou une passion mal touchée, ou quelques vers rudes, ou enfin quelque chose de trop libre, si c'est du comique' (p. 65). The reading completed, they would discuss 'si l'intrigue est belle et bien suivie, et le dénouement heureux..., si les scènes sont bien liées, les vers aisés et pompeux selon la nature du sujet, et si les caractères sont bien soutenus, sans toutefois les outrer, ce qui arrive souvent' (p. 65). As we have seen, play-readings were rarely attended by the female members of the company who preferred 'par modestie' to leave judgements in such matters to the men. Chappuzeau is particularly disapproving of this practice, affirming that

² La Chappelle later claimed Les Carrosses d'Orléans was his work (Lancaster, History, IV, 453).

³ Victor Fournel, Petites Comédies rares et curieuses du XVII^e siècle, 2 vols (Paris, 1884), I, 142.

some actresses are knowledgeable enough to give advice to the authors themselves, adding that they would do well to attend in the interests of their art if nothing else, since such readings give them the opportunity to get the meaning of a line straight from the author's mouth and discuss any possible difficulties with him (p. 66).

Once a play had been read and approved, the troupe would discuss terms with its author. We have already considered the various ways by which a play could be purchased: either by means of a lump sum of up to 2,000 livres or else by the author being awarded two shares in the takings for his play's first run, which two shares could be calculated in a variety of ways. Chappuzeau adds, however, that such terms were only available to authors with established reputations, and that an unknown playwright would receive little or no money for his work and still consider it an honour to have it performed. When a play was a great success, over and above the actors' expectations, they would show their appreciation by making a present to its author 'qui se trouve engagé par là de conserver son affection pour la troupe' (pp. 67-9). Although we have no instance in the Guénégaud Registres of an actual cash bonus being given to an author, we have already considered examples of certain playwrights, notably Montfleury and Thomas Corneille, being treated with scrupulous fairness and compensated whenever it was felt that the share system worked to their disadvantage. The meeting over, 'le plus souvent l'auteur et les comédiens ne se quittent point sans se régaler ensemble, ce qui conclut le traité' (p. 69). As we have seen, there is one reference to such a play-reading in the Guénégaud Registres when, on 7 July 1675, M. Dauvilliers received 42 livres 5 sols 'pour un repas fait avec la compagnie après la lecture de la pièce de M. Abeille' (R III, 33).

CASTING AND REHEARSALS

After the reading of a successful play, rôles would be distributed. Sometimes there would be difficulties in this respect, particularly, according to Chappuzeau, where the actresses were concerned (p. 71). This is reminiscent of the difficulties Molière reputedly encountered in satisfying the demands of his three leading ladies, Madeleine Béjart, Mlle De Brie and Mlle Du Parc, to which Chappelle refers in a letter to his friend of 1659.⁴ A similar rivalry is presented by Du Tralage as having been one of the reasons behind the exclusion of Dauvilliers and Mlle Dupin and their spouses from the Guénégaud troupe just prior to the production of Circé.⁵

According to Chappuzeau, in order to avoid such unpleasant consequences of personal rivalries, the troupe frequently handed the responsibility for the casting of a play back to its author:

... à Paris, quand l'auteur connaît la force et le talent de chacun, (ce qu'il est bon qu'il sache pour prendre mieux ses mesures) les comédiens se déchargent sur lui avec plaisir de la distribution des rôles, en quoi il prend aussi quelquefois le conseil d'un de la troupe. Mais encore est-il souvent assez empêché, et il a de la peine à contenter tout le monde. (pp. 71-2)

This again emphasizes the fact that certain authors had special relationships with certain troupes and wrote specifically with those actors in mind.

Unfortunately, space does not permit an attempted reconstruction of the casting of all those plays presented at the Guénégaud. In any case, with the exception of plays by Molière and those which were still in the repertory of the Comédie-Française in 1685, evidence on this

⁴ René Bray, Molière homme de théâtre (Paris, 1954), p. 61.

⁵ Jean Nicholas Du Tralage, Notes et documents sur l'histoire des théâtres de Paris au XVII^e siècle (Paris, 1867-90; reprinted Geneva, 1969), pp. 19-22.

matter is limited. For 1685, however, information is provided by a Répertoire des comédies françaises qui se peuvent jouer, published by H.C. Lancaster under the title Actors' Rôles at the Comédie-Française.⁶ Basing his researches on this document, Roger Herzelt has attempted to establish the original casting of Molière's plays.⁷ As, once a play had been cast, it was rare for that casting to be changed other than for practical considerations, and as a great many of Molière's actors continued on into the Guénégaud troupe and subsequently that of the Comédie-Française, Herzelt's work gives us a fairly accurate idea of how Molière's plays would have been cast at the Guénégaud, while the Répertoire gives us clues for the works of other authors.

Herzelt sees this long-term retention of rôles as being symptomatic of a desire for security on the part of the actor or actress, who also preferred to take refuge in stock characters and type-casting, rather than testing his or her talents by tackling a wide variety of rôles (p. 29). The importance of the repertory system as a factor contributing to this conservatism cannot be overemphasized. At the Guénégaud, as many as forty-nine different plays could be performed in any one season, and, with the exception of runs of new plays and significant revivals, it was rare for any work to be given more than two or three times in succession. The feats of memory demanded of the actors must, therefore, have been prodigious, and it is little wonder that they clung on to a rôle once it had been learned, and took refuge wherever possible in stock characterization.

⁶ Henry Carrington Lancaster, Actors' Rôles at the Comédie-Française according to the Répertoire des comédies qui se peuvent jouer en 1685 (Baltimore, 1953).

⁷ Roger Herzelt, The Original Casting of Molière's Plays (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1981).

Of the actors' powers of memory, Chappuzeau writes that when necessary they were able to learn a whole play in a week (a claim that would seem to be contradicted somewhat by the complaints attributed to his company by Molière in L'Impromptu de Versailles), adding that some lucky individuals had the ability to memorize a rôle however long in just three mornings. It was only once a play had been thoroughly learned by the entire company that rehearsals would commence:

... quand ils se sentent fermes dans leur étude, ils s'assemblent pour la première répétition, qui ne sert qu'à ébaucher et ce n'est qu'à la seconde ou à la troisième qu'on commence à bien juger du succès que la pièce peut avoir. Ils ne se hasardent pas de la produire avant qu'elle ne soit parfaitement sue et bien concertée, et la dernière répétition doit être juste comme lorsqu'on la veut représenter. (p. 72)

According to Chappuzeau, the author would ordinarily be present at these rehearsals:

... et relève le comédien, s'il tombe en quelque défaut, s'il ne prend pas bien le sens, s'il sort du naturel dans la voix ou dans le geste, s'il apporte plus ou moins de chaleur qu'il n'est à propos dans les passions qui en demandent. Il est libre aux comédiens intelligents de donner aussi leurs avis dans ces répétitions, sans que son camarade le trouve mauvais, parce qu'il s'agit du bien public. (pp. 72-3)

This, taken together with the responsibility for a play's casting attributed to the dramatist by Chappuzeau, would seem to indicate that the author played a far greater part in his work's production than has hitherto been supposed. This might even lead one to wonder whether the directorial rôle ascribed to Molière, largely on the basis of the evidence of L'Impromptu de Versailles, was in fact permanently his, or whether he could be said to be acting as the director on that occasion because he is playing the rôle of the author of the play within the play. Indeed, it would seem from Chappuzeau's remarks that there was at his time of writing no director as the term is understood in the

twentieth century - one individual with overall artistic authority. Rather, plays were put on as the product of a collective effort to which the author was allowed to contribute far more than just his text.

A certain amount of evidence is available to back up Chappuzeau's claims. We will see that Thomas Corneille travels from Rouen to Paris in 1660 in order to prepare the production of his tragedy Stilicon at the Hôtel de Bourgogne.⁸ Moreover, the Prologue to Le Comédien poète on which Thomas collaborated with Montfleury, consists of a discussion between an actor, a décorateur and an author concerning a rehearsal of the latter's play which is about to take place. The actor reports that the other members of the company are complaining because, 'l'on n'a pas accoutumé de faire les répétitions avec les habits, les décorations et les violons', to which the author replies: 'Je suis persuadé, quant à moi, que les choses s'en concertent avec plus de justesse, que les acteurs en jouent avec plus de soin, et que l'on voit mieux ce qui manque à l'agrément de chaque chose'.⁹ It was evidently considered necessary to justify this breach of current theatrical practice made in the interests of providing spectacle for the Guénégaud audience of Le Comédien poète, but it was not similarly necessary to justify the presence of the author at the rehearsal of his work. Further details as to the conduct of rehearsals at the Guénégaud are provided by the last lines of the Prologue to Le Comédien poète. The actor exits declaring: 'Je m'en vais derrière le théâtre pour tenir la pièce, et souffler s'il en est besoin', to which the author replies: 'Et moi, je m'en vais près d'eux <les acteurs> pour leur faire observer leurs entrées et leurs sorties. Mais, afin que tout se fasse en ordre, que Messieurs vos

⁸ Christopher J. Gossip, 'The Roman Tragedies of Thomas Corneille' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1971), p. 1043.

⁹ Fournel, Petites Comédies, I, 108.

Violons jouent l'air qu'on a fait pour l'ouverture du théâtre' (pp. 109-10).

The greater number of references to rehearsals in the Guénégaud Registres deal with the purchase of refreshments (usually referred to as 'pain et vin') to be consumed at them, or with the provision of heating. The sums spent on refreshments could be considerable, particularly when numerous singers, dancers and musicians were involved, as in the production of a machine play. For example, on 22 February 1675, 134 livres 6 sols 6 deniers were paid to a cabaretier for providing food and drink at an unspecified number of rehearsals for Circé (R. II, 136). Two cabaretiers were used by the Guénégaud company on a regular basis: M. Macé or Massé and M. Docquin. Predictably, such payments to cabaretiers occur most frequently in the periods immediately preceeding the production of new plays, particularly machine plays, and during the last seasons of the Guénégaud's existence, when the size of its repertory was significantly increased and a considerable number of old plays revived. Indeed, it would appear that during this last period the company rehearsed on a daily basis.

The majority of rehearsals would, no doubt, have been held on the Guénégaud stage, as is indicated by the reference to a double lock to be put on the door linking the theatre with Mlle Molière's residence, to which Sourdéac and Champeron were to have a key 'pour la faire ouvrir aux jours de représentation et de répétition' (R II, 139 v°). Indeed, to allow for the technical rehearsal on stage of complex machine plays, the Guénégaud troupe was forced to close its doors and cease performances. Thus, the theatre closed for one day for the rehearsals of L'Inconnu on 15 November 1675 and La Devineresse on 17 November 1679, for two days for Le Triomphe des dames on 31 July and 4 August 1676, and for a full

seven performing days for Circé, from 1 March to 15 March 1675 inclusive (R II, 137-9; III, 92-3; IV, 44-5; VII, 114).

Occasionally rehearsals were held elsewhere, as when for L'Inconnu in November 1675, 22 livres were spent 'pour le pain et le vin des répétitions qui ont été faites chez M. Aubry' (R III, 97 v^o). This was, in fact, the above mentioned residence of Mlle Molière, the Hôtel d'Arras in the rue de Seine, which she had leased for six years in August 1673, together with her sister, Geneviève Béjart and brother-in-law, Jean-Baptiste Aubry.¹⁰ In 1676-7, a series of rehearsals was held at the home of Mlle Guyot, for which the Guénégaud company provided firewood (R IV, 102-7). These were for Pradon's tragedy, Phèdre et Hippolyte; and it may, perhaps, be deduced from this fact that the title rôle was played by this actress. If so, it was only after a certain amount of disagreement and almost as a last resort, as Pradon explains in his Preface: 'Ces anciens Grecs, dont le style est si sublime, et qui nous doivent servir de modèles, n'auraient point empêché dans Athènes les meilleures actrices d'une troupe de jouer un premier rôle, comme nos Modernes l'ont fait à Paris au théâtre de Guénégaud'.¹¹ More explicit details are given in the Gazette d'Amsterdam:

L'on représenta la semaine dernière sur le théâtre de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne une tragédie de l'illustre M. de Racine, intitulée Phèdre et Hippolyte. Le même sujet a été traité par M. Pradon, et représenté sur le théâtre des comédiens de la rue Guénégaud. On a trouvé la première dans le goût des anciens, mais la dernière a plus donné dans celui du public, ce qui ne nuira pas aux comédiens qui désespéraient de pouvoir jouer cette pièce, parce que deux de leurs meilleures actrices en avaient refusé le premier rôle, par intrigue ou par caprice; mais heureusement pour l'auteur ce rôle est tombé à une comédienne qui non-

¹⁰ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 660.

¹¹ Jacques Pradon, Phèdre et Hippolyte, tragédie (Paris, 1677).

seulement s'est surpassée elle-même, mais qui a surpassé toutes les autres, dont le public a été très satisfait.¹²

Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that Mlle Guyot should have required additional private coaching, which clearly paid dividends, nor, in this general climate, that the Guénégaud company were occasionally forced to ensure the security of their rehearsals, as when for Circé they paid 9 livres 'à Subtil pour avoir gardé la porte pendant les répétitions' (R II, 147 v°).

One final series of entries in the Guénégaud Registres relate to rehearsals at that theatre. These concern the provision of transport for certain assistants to enable them to attend. Thus, on 24 February 1675, 3 livres were paid 'pour une chaise pour la répétition au petit Du Croisy pour Circé', and the singer, Mlle Bastonnet had 'voitures' and 'chaises' provided for her to attend rehearsals of both Circé and L'Inconnu (R II, 137, 144 v°; III, 98 v°).

PERFORMANCE

Season

According to Chappuzeau, all seasons of the year were good for good comedies, but great (i.e. tragic) authors only wanted their plays to be produced in the period from Toussaint to Easter, when the court was assembled either at the Louvre or Saint-Germain-en-Laye, with the result that winter was the season for 'pièces héroïques', and summer for comedies (p. 69). In fact, Chappuzeau appears to have considered the summer and autumn to be slack periods for the theatre generally, for he defines a 'répertoire' as 'une liste de vieilles pièces, pour entretenir le théâtre durant les chaleurs de l'été et les promenades de l'automne' (pp. 109-10). We can attempt to determine whether these claims are

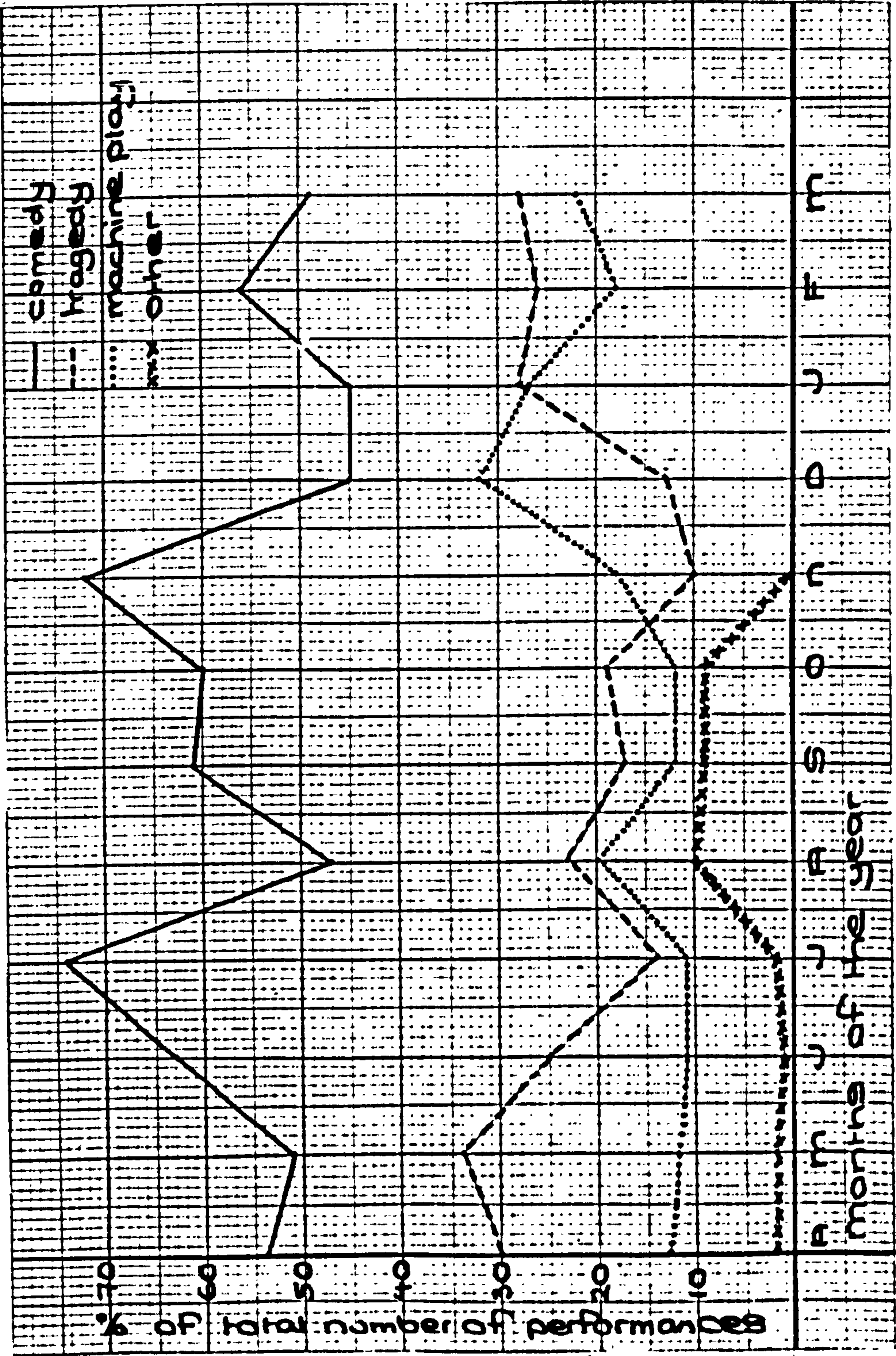
¹² La Gazette d'Amsterdam (14 January 1677).

correct by analyzing the performance details contained in the Guénégaud Registres.

As far as the creation of premières at the Guénégaud is concerned, Chappuzeau's assertions are partially borne out. Of the twenty-three new plays given at the Guénégaud, seventeen or 74% were first performed between Toussaint and Easter. Of the remaining six, three were first given in May and three in August. It is not the case, however, that more new tragedies than comedies were given during the winter months, since seven of each genre were first performed, plus three machine plays. On the other hand, it does appear that it was more rare for a tragedy to be first performed during the spring and summer months, for of the six plays first given at this time of year, only one was a tragedy, Iphigénie by Le Clerc and Coras, and the timing of its production was dictated by that of Racine's play on the same subject at the Hôtel de Bourgogne which it was intended to rival. The pattern of revival in the Guénégaud repertory bears out Chappuzeau's claims still more conclusively. Of the fifty-nine revivals given at the Guénégaud, only four or 7% were first performed there between Toussaint and Easter. It would seem indisputable, therefore, that this was the period of the première, whereas spring and summer were the period of the revival.

The average seasonal variations in the genre of works presented at the Guénégaud are rather less conclusive as the following graph demonstrates.

AVERAGE SEASONAL VARIATIONS IN THE GENRE OF PLAY PERFORMED



It is not true to say that in general more performances of comedies were given in the spring and summer months and more of tragedies in the autumn and winter, although this may have been the case for certain months in certain theatrical seasons. As the graph shows, for no month did the average of tragedies presented at the Guénégaud exceed that of comedies, and although the first peak in the performance of comedies occurs in July as might be expected, a second occurs in November, with a concomitant fall in the number of tragedies presented that month. In fact, on average fewer tragedies were presented in November and December than in any other month, although the number does rise suddenly in January and remain high, peaking in May. One explanation of this high number of tragedies presented in the spring could be that the vast majority of plays of this genre given at the Guénégaud were revivals, and so were considered more appropriate to that time of year. The plays classified as 'other' for the purposes of this graph (tragicomedies, comédies héroïques and pastorals) were also all revivals, and it is interesting to note that in no season were any of these performed between Toussaint and Easter, the period associated with premières. Finally, it emerges from this graph of average seasonal variations that there is a significant peak in the number of performances of machine plays in December. Might one suppose that spectacular productions were associated with this time of year in much the same way as the pantomime is with Christmas in England today?

Day

In the seventeenth-century Parisian theatre, the week was divided up into jours ordinaires: Tuesday, Friday and Sunday, and jours extraordinaires: the remaining days of the week. At the Guénégaud, the French company performed on the more popular jours ordinaires, and the Italians on the jours extraordinaires. This practice of the two troupes

alternating their performances had been established when Molière's company first returned to Paris from the provinces. At the Petit-Bourbon, however, it had been Molière's troupe that had performed on the jours extraordinaires, with the positions only being reversed upon the two companies' transfer to the Palais-Royal.¹³ The supposed inferiority of the jours extraordinaires is explained by Chappuzeau thus:

... le lundi étant le grand ordinaire pour l'Allemagne et pour l'Italie, et pour toutes les provinces du royaume qui sont sur la route; le mercredi et le samedi jours de marché et d'affaires, où le bourgeois est plus occupé qu'en d'autres; et le jeudi étant comme consacré en bien des lieux pour un jour de promenade surtout aux académies et aux collèges. (p. 70)

When the Italian actors were absent from the capital, the Guénégaud company sometimes took the opportunity to perform on the jours extraordinaires also, thus looking forward to the pattern of production that was to be employed by the much larger Comédie-Française company. The following chart demonstrates the frequency with which this occurred, showing the total number of performances per season, the number of performances on jours extraordinaires, and this number as a percentage of the total.

¹³ When the majority of the Italian troupe returned to Italy in July 1659, Molière's troupe seized the opportunity to perform on the jours ordinaires. The Italians returned in January 1662, a year after Molière's troupe had installed themselves in the Palais-Royal, to find themselves relegated to the jours extraordinaires (La Grange, Registre, I, 1, 7, 42).

PERFORMANCES ON JOURS EXTRAORDINAIRES

SEASON	TOTAL	EXRES	%
1673-4	108	5	4.6
1674-5	145	1	0.7
1675-6	146	9	6.2
1676-7	131	2	1.5
1677-8	144	5	3.5
1678-9	163	20	12.3
1679-80	179	29	16.2
1680-1	77	28	36.4

Certain of these absences on the part of the Italian troupe can be accounted for. When the Guénégaud theatre opened in 1673-4, the Italians were, as we have seen, at the English Court. The exact date of their departure and return is not known, although they were given a permit to import their stage properties on 17 December 1672, and the order for the export of their goods is dated 12 September 1673.¹⁴ During this season, the Guénégaud company performed on the following jours extraordinaires: 10, 16 and 24 August, 21 September and 9 October (R I, 16, 19, 23, 35, 44). The Italians returned to England two seasons later in 1675-6. The Guénégaud Registre for that season includes the following entry: 'le samedi 22 juin les Italiens sont partis pour aller en Angleterre et ont payé 600 livres pour deux termes du loyer de l'Hôtel ... le lundi 4^e novembre la troupe italienne est de retour de l'Angleterre' (R III, 143 v^o).¹⁵ The Italian company was also extremely popular with the French

¹⁴ Rosenfeld, Foreign Theatrical Companies, p. 2.

¹⁵ The English customs were ordered to deliver the Italian's habits and scenes on 20 June, and they were granted free export of their goods in the King's yacht on 4 October (Rosenfeld, Foreign Theatrical Companies, p. 3).

Court. They were at Fontainebleau in August and September 1678,¹⁶ and there again the following season from August to October.¹⁷

The increase in the number of performances given on the jours extraordinaires by the Guénégaud company in the last three seasons of its activity is particularly marked. It has generally been supposed that such a pattern of performance was only possible at the Comédie-Française thanks to the increase in numbers brought about by the merger of the Guénégaud and Hôtel de Bourgogne companies, whereas, in fact, the Guénégaud was performing seven days a week for extended periods some two seasons earlier. Besides significantly increasing the company's revenue, this practice may well have also formed part of the Guénégaud's competitive attitude towards the Hôtel de Bourgogne which will be discussed in more detail later.

Of the jours ordinaires, it was, according to Chappuzeau, always Friday that was chosen for the presentation of new plays 'pour préparer l'assemblée à se rendre plus grande le dimanche suivant par les éloges que lui donnent l'annonce et l'affiche' (p. 70). This custom was not, however, strictly adhered to at the Guénégaud where, of the twenty-three premières presented, sixteen were first given on a Friday, four on a Sunday and three on a Tuesday. Interestingly, those plays first given on a Sunday were Thomas Corneille's Circé, L'Inconnu and La Devineresse, and Pradon's Phèdre et Hippolyte, all works where the interest and excitement aroused in the public prior to production would no doubt have made the publicity provided by a Friday opening redundant.

The plays first performed on a Tuesday were Boursault's La Princesse de Clèves, the anonymous Le Gentilhomme meunier and Agamemnon,

¹⁶ Mercure galant (August 1678), p. 368; La Grange, Registre, I, 210 (10 September 1678).

¹⁷ Mercure galant (September 1679), p. 264; La Grange, Registre, I, 223 (28 August 1679) and 226 (13 October 1679).

attributed to Pader d'Assezan in the Registres but claimed by Boyer.¹⁸ The first of these, unfortunately lost, is interesting in that some fifteen years after its performance at the Guénégaud, Boursault wrote a letter in which he declared:

Je ne vois rien dans notre langue de plus agréable, que le petit roman de La Princesse de Clèves: les noms des personnages qui le composent sont doux à l'oreille, et faciles à mettre en vers: l'intrigue intéresse le lecteur depuis le commencement jusqu'à la fin; et le coeur prend part à tous les mouvements qui se succèdent l'un à l'autre. J'en fis une pièce de théâtre, dont j'espérais un si grand succès, que c'était le fond le plus liquide que j'eusse pour le paiement de mes créanciers, qui tombèrent de leur haut, quand ils apprirent la chute de mon ouvrage. Faites-moi grâce, Madame, de ne point trembler pour eux: je les satisfis l'année suivante; et comme La Princesse de Clèves, n'avait paru que deux ou trois fois, on s'en souvint si peu un an après, que sous le nom de Germanicus, elle eut un succès considérable. J'avais pris cependant toutes les précautions possibles pour faire réussir La Princesse de Clèves; et persuadé qu'il est dangeureux d'exposer de trop grandes nouveautés, je croyais qu'un prologue que je fis pour préparer les auditeurs à ce qu'ils allaient voir, me les rendrait favorables; mais les oreilles ne purent s'accommoder de ce qu'elles n'avaient pas coutume d'entendre, et le prologue attira plus d'applaudissements que la pièce.¹⁹

This account of events cannot, however, be correct, for Mme de La Fayette's novel was only published in 1678, whereas Germanicus was first performed at the Marais theatre in May 1673,²⁰ and La Princesse de Clèves at the Guénégaud in December 1678. What is more, Germanicus enjoyed a certain degree of success, being revived at the Marais in June 1673,²¹ and being given nine performances at the Guénégaud in 1673-4, and a further two in 1676-7. La Princesse de Clèves, on the other hand,

¹⁸ Lancaster, History, IV, 155-6.

¹⁹ Edme Boursault, Lettres nouvelles (Paris, 1697), I, 303-15; in Claude et François Parfaict, Dictionnaire des théâtres de Paris, 7 vols (Paris, 1756), reprinted Geneva, 1967, III, 169-71.

²⁰ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, II, 188.

²¹ Ibid., p. 189.

was dropped from the Guénégaud repertory after only two performances in 1678-9. H.C. Lancaster examines the various explanations of this disparity at great length, before coming to the obvious conclusion that La Princesse de Cleves was based on Germanicus, adapted to resemble Mme de La Fayette's novel, rather than Boursault's adaptation being re-entitled Germanicus. There is, however, no evidence to support Lancaster's further contention that La Princesse de Clèves was subsequently offered to the Hôtel de Bourgogne under the title Germanicus.²² This still does not explain why it was first performed on a Tuesday.

The second of the three works first presented on a Tuesday is the anonymous petite pièce, Le Gentilhomme meunier. The first performance of this play was in accompaniment to the revival at the Guénégaud of Racine's Phèdre, and here the fact that the major work on the bill was not a première seems to have over-ridden the fact that the petite pièce was. As for the third of the three plays first performed on a Tuesday - Boyer's Agamemnon, its production had to be postponed for a considerable period on account of the extraordinary success of La Devineresse, as is related in Le Mercure galant:

Je croyais vous apprendre le succès d'Agamemnon, affiché depuis longtemps par la Troupe du Roi, qu'on appelle de Guénégaud; mais la foule augmente de jour en jour aux représentations de La Devineresse, et non seulement elles ont continué jusqu'à aujourd'hui depuis la Saint Martin qu'elle a commencé de paraître sur le théâtre, mais il y a grande apparence qu'elles continueront tout le reste du Carnaval.²³

Agamemnon was no doubt performed as soon as possible after La Devineresse closed, without there being the need for any additional

²² Lancaster, History, IV, 140-2.

²³ Mercure galant (January 1680), pp. 304-5.

publicity. One could see this as an illustration of the way in which the primitive methods of the annonce and the affiche were beginning to be replaced by the more modern publicity provided by such papers as Le Mercure galant.

The link between Friday and Sunday performances was not only limited to premières, and many old plays were revived at the Guénégaud on a Friday to take advantage of the beneficial publicity thus provided. The following chart shows the popularity of the different days of the week for the introduction of plays into the repertory in terms of the number of works both old and new performed for the first time on that day.

DAYS OF THE WEEK ON WHICH WORKS ENTERED THE GUENEGAUD REPERTORY

DAY	NUMBER
Monday	1
Tuesday	19
Wednesday	3
Thursday	1
Friday	53
Saturday	1
Sunday	9
Total	87

Thus, over 60% of all the plays performed at the Guénégaud were produced there for the first time on a Friday. This Friday to Sunday continuity was an established feature of programming at the Guénégaud, and it was very ^{rare} for the play that was given on a Friday not to be performed the following Sunday. This occurred a mere four times in 1673-4, three times in 1674-5, once in 1675-6, five times in 1676-7, twice in 1677-8, ten times in 1678-9, three times in 1679-80 and three times in 1680-1.

Not surprisingly, Sunday - the only day on which the majority of working people were free - was the most popular day of the week for

going to the theatre. This is clear from the following chart which shows the total attendance for each of the jours ordinaires per season together with the average for that day.²⁴

ATTENDANCES ON THE JOURS ORDINAIRES PER SEASON

	DAY	TOTAL ATTENDANCE	AVERAGE
1673-4	Tuesday	9,884	282
	Friday	9,747	296
	Sunday	14,971	428
	other	1,816	363
1674-5	Tuesday	15,735	342
	Friday	17,751	362
	Sunday	23,204	473
	other	316	316
1675-6	Tuesday	17,894	373
	Friday	18,131	412
	Sunday	22,674	504
	other	3,407	378
1676-7	Tuesday	10,419	248
	Friday	11,759	273
	Sunday	15,330	348
	other	447	223
1677-8	Tuesday	15,757	328
	Friday	13,923	303
	Sunday	19,122	425
	other	1,657	331
1678-9	Tuesday	13,733	286
	Friday	14,729	301
	Sunday	18,670	406
	other	4,117	206

²⁴ Where entries in the Registres relate to the sale of boxes as units, attendances in the first and second rows have been calculated by the same method used to determine the capacity of the Guénégaud's boxes. Boxes may, of course, have been hired as units without having been occupied by their full complement of spectators. Where boxes are described as having been hired as units but with the given sum not corresponding to an accepted box size, this has been divided into the number of tickets it represents. Occasionally sums of money are entered in the Registres without it being specified from which area of the house they derive, thus making it impossible to calculate the number of tickets they represent. These sums have, therefore, been omitted.

1679-80	Tuesday	21,137	414
	Friday	23,184	473
	Sunday	27,509	550
	other	10,870	375
1680-1	Tuesday	5,389	317
	Friday	6,711	395
	Sunday	6,369	425
	other	9,631	344

A final note on the matter of performance days is that during those periods when the Guénégaud company was free to perform seven days a week due to the temporary absence from the capital of the Italian troupe, the jours ordinaires were considered to form one unit and the jours extraordinaires another, with no continuity between them. This is best illustrated by the first run of Boyer's Agamemnon, first produced on 12 March 1680 and then performed continuously on the jours ordinaires until its initial popularity had been exhausted, but with other plays being intercalated on the jours extraordinaires. Thus the first week of the first run of Agamemnon was as follows:

Sunday 10 March	<u>La Devineresse</u>
Monday 11 March	<u>Le Malade imaginaire</u>
Tuesday 12 March	<u>Agamemnon (première)</u>
Wednesday 13 March	<u>Le Malade imaginaire</u>
Thursday 14 March	<u>Le Festin de pierre</u>
Friday 15 March	<u>Agamemnon</u>
Saturday 16 March	<u>Amphitryon</u>
Sunday 17 March	<u>Agamemnon</u>

This was also the practice for the presentation of important revivals. Generally, older works were performed in repertory, being given no more than two or three successive performances, but, even so, when the company was performing on the jours extraordinaires, different works were given on these days.

Time

There is no evidence in the Guénégaud Registres as to what time performances would have begun there. An ordonnance of 1609 was still in

effect which forbade actors 'depuis le jour de Saint Martin jusqu'au quinzième février, de jouer passé quatre heures et demie au plus tard; auxquels pour cet effet enjoignons de commencer précisément avec telles personnes qu'il y aura à deux heures après midi et finir à ladite heure; que la porte soit ouverte à une heure précise'.²⁵ Later in the century performances appear to have begun considerably later, despite the fact that two o'clock was still given as the starting time on the posters, due to the custom of waiting until the auditorium had filled.²⁶ In 1668, De Pure in his Idée des spectacles recommended that performances should begin earlier, advocating a 3.30 start in winter and 4.30 in summer.²⁷ But in 1687, when the actors of the Comédie-Française were obliged to search for new premises, they addressed a petition to the Lieutenant de Police in which they stated categorically that 'La comédie ne commence qu'après cinq heures'.²⁸ Given this evidence, it would appear likely that performances at the Guénégaud also began at five o'clock.

TICKET PRICES

As we have seen, ticket prices in the Parisian theatre of the seventeenth century were on two scales, depending on whether the main play presented was enjoying its first run or a major revival, or whether it was an older work being performed in repertory. In the former case, plays were said to be performed au double, and in the latter au simple or à l'ordre. The following chart shows the cost of a ticket at the two rates in the various areas of the house during the first seasons of the Guénégaud's activity.

²⁵ Lamare, Traité, I, 440.

²⁶ Eugène Despois, Le Théâtre français sous Louis XIV (Paris, 1886), pp. 145-6.

²⁷ De Pure, Idée, p. 174.

²⁸ Bourdel, 'Etablissement', p. 152.

TICKET PRICES 'AU DOUBLE' AND 'A L'ORDRE'

SEATS	'A L'ORDRE'	'AU DOUBLE'
<u>Théâtre</u>	5# 10 ^s	5# 10 ^s
<u>1^{res} Loges</u>	5# 10 ^s	5# 10 ^s
<u>Amphithéâtre</u>	3#	5# 10 ^s
<u>2^{es} Loges</u>	1# 10 ^s	3#
<u>3^{es} Loges</u>	1#	2#
<u>Parterre</u>	15 ^s	1# 10 ^s

Thus, alone seats on the stage and in the first row of boxes (and, therefore, in the loges d'avant-scène), did not have their prices raised for performances au double. From late 1676 onwards, however, ticket prices in these areas were for the most part reduced to 3 livres for performances à l'ordre, being increased to 5 livres 10 sols for performances au double. In fact, the decision to reduce ticket prices for the stage does not appear to have been taken unilaterally. The first time prices were reduced for the stage was on 6 October 1676, when the heading 'Théâtre' was bracketed with 'Premières Loges' and 'Amphithéâtre'. Tickets for the stage, however, were sold at 5 livres 10 sols for the next three performances, apparently being reduced once more on 16 October, when 'Théâtre' was once more bracketed with the other two headings. At the next performance, 'Théâtre' was left blank, but was bracketed at the next four. Prices rose once more on 3 November, but the 'Théâtre' was bracketed again the following day. On 6 November 1676, we find the first actual instance of tickets being sold for the stage at 3 livres, when thirty-eight were taken for Le Misanthrope and George Dandin, but prices rose again at the very next performance. The following day, however, they would appear to have fallen again, since under 'Théâtre' we find an entry for forty-six tickets at 3 livres, but here the entries for 'Théâtre' and 'Premières Loges' seem to have been accidentally reversed, for under the latter heading we find a reference to the sale of two tickets at 5 livres 10 sols. Prices for the stage

fell, however, at the next performance on 10 November, and stayed down up to the revival of Le Triomphe des dames on 20 November. From this point on, tickets for the stage were habitually sold at 3 livres à l'ordre.²⁹

Nevertheless, even after this price reduction, occasional tickets continued to be sold at 5 livres 10 sols for performances à l'ordre. This is particularly noticeable in the records of sums owed by members of the nobility: 16 livres 10 sols by the Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon for La Dame médecin on 28 January 1678; the same sum by the same gentleman for Le Bourgeois gentilhomme on 14 August 1678; 11 livres by the Prince de Conti for the above play on 16 August 1678; 27 livres 10 sols by the Princes de Conti for L'Etourdi on 21 August 1678; one seat at 5 livres 10 sols by M. De la Roche-sur-Yon at Les Femmes savantes and Le Gentilhomme meunier on 16 May 1679; two seats at 5 livres 10 sols by the same gentleman at Phèdre and Le Sicilien on 20 June 1679; 11 livres by the Duc de Saint-Aignan at Le Sicilien and Monsieur de Pourceaugnac on 23 July 1679; and the same sum by the same gentleman at Le Festin de pierre on 29 September 1679 (R V, 113; VI, 50-3; VII, 16, 29, 43, 81). As all but the first of these sums owed are for performances where tickets were also sold for the stage at 3 livres, I would suggest that places in the loges d'avant-scène were considered to be so far preferable to those on the stage benches that they were charged for at the higher rate even for performances à l'ordre. This is all the more likely in that first row boxes hired as units continued to be taken at multiples of 5 livres 10 sols at all performances even after the price

²⁹ These fluctuations in ticket price might be supposed to have been related to the different types of play presented, with prices being raised for machine plays or for more recent works. This cannot have been the case, however, for, with the exception of Le Triomphe des dames, the works performed were all revivals: eleven by Molière, and four others by Quinault, Rosimond, Montfleury and Thomas Corneille.

reduction. Second-row boxes on the other hand, cost, in the majority of cases, 12 livres at performances à l'ordre and 24 livres at performances au double.

The following chart shows the incidence of performances with at least one area of the house at a raised price level at the Guénégaud theatre.

PERFORMANCES 'AU DOUBLE' AT THE GUENEGAUD THEATRE

SEASON	TOTAL PERFORMANCES	PERFORMANCES 'AU DOUBLE'	%
1673-4	108	18	16.7
1674-5	145	25	17.2
1675-6	146	76	52.0
1676-7	131	52	39.7
1677-8	144	28	19.4
1678-9	163	12	7.4
1679-80	179	34	19.0
1680-1	77	3	3.9

One of the most striking features is the sudden drop in the percentage of performances au double during 1678-9 when the number of revivals being introduced into the Guénégaud repertory was particularly high. The elevated number of performances au double in 1675-6 and 1676-7 is accounted for by the long runs of Circé in the former season and Phèdre et Hippolyte and Le Festin de pierre in the latter.

For new plays, seat prices were reduced back to their usual level when the work was no longer attracting sufficiently large audiences or bringing in sufficient revenue to justify its being maintained au double. Thus, the length of time a play was maintained au double was some indication of its initial success. The chart below shows the number of performances at which ticket prices were raised for the various areas of the house.

PERFORMANCES AT INCREASED PRICES AT THE GUENEGAUD THEATRE ³⁰

WORK	TH	L1	A	L2	L3	P
<u>Germanicus</u>	-	-	1	1	1 à 2 [#]	1
<u>Comédien poète</u>	-	-	8	8	8 à 2 [#]	8
<u>Mort d'Achilles</u>	-	-	6	6	6 à 2 [#]	6
<u>Trigaudin</u>	-	-	3	3	3 à 2 [#]	3
<u>Malade imaginaire</u> (1674-5)	-	-	7	7	7 à 2 [#]	7 ³¹
" (1677-8)	6	6	-	-	-	- ³²
" (1678-9)	3	3	-	-	-	-
<u>Panurge</u>	-	-	4	4	4 à 2 [#]	4
<u>Dom César d'Avalos</u>	-	-	5	5	5 à 2 [#]	5
<u>Circé</u>	-	-	63	63	15 à 2 [#] , 48 à 1 [#] 10 ^s	39
<u>Iphigénie</u>	-	-	4	4	3 à 2 [#] , 1 à 1 [#] 10 ^s	4
<u>Inconnu</u> (1675-6)	-	-	10	10	4 à 2 [#] , 6 à 1 [#] 10 ^s	10
" (1678-9)	6	6	-	-	-	-
" (1679-80)	2	-	-	-	-	-
<u>Coriolan</u>	-	-	8	8	6 à 2 [#] , 2 à 1 [#] 10 ^s	6
<u>Triomphe des dames</u>	24	23	14	14	5 à 2 [#] , 9 à 1 [#] 10 ^s	10
<u>Phèdre et Hippolyte</u>	21	19	19	19	6 à 2 [#] , 13 à 1 [#] 10 ^s	16
<u>Festin de pierre</u>	8	7	7	7	7 à 1 [#] 10 ^s	7
<u>Electre</u>	8	8	5	5	5 à 1 [#] 10 ^s	5
<u>Dame médecin</u>	5	5	5	5	5 à 1 [#] 10 ^s	5
<u>Comte d'Essex</u>	8	5	6	3	3 à 1 [#] 10 ^s	3
<u>Cavalier par amour</u>	2	2	2	2	2 à 2 [#]	2
<u>Princesse de Clèves</u>	1	1	1	1	1 à 2 [#]	1
<u>Devineresse</u>	18	18	16	16	16 à 2 [#]	16
<u>Agamemnon</u>	13	13	13	13	1 à 2 [#] , 12 à 1 [#] 10 ^s	9
<u>Bassette</u>	3	3	3	3	3 à 1 [#] 10 ^s	3

It will be seen that the practice of raising ticket prices au double was, in fact, far more complex than is generally believed. Up to 1675, the double was employed at the Guénégaud in the conventionally accepted fashion, with prices for all areas of the house except the two most expensive being maintained at their increased level for a given number of performances and then all being reduced at the same time. The

³⁰ This chart only takes into consideration premières and important revivals and does not include those fluctuations which occurred at the time of the price reduction for the stage and first row of boxes. Prices were not raised for the first production of petites pièces accompanying older works. For details as to the authorship of these works and their production and performance at the Guénégaud, see Appendix Two, 'The Repertory of the Guénégaud theatre 1673-1680', and Appendix Three, 'Performances at the Guénégaud Theatre 1673-1680'.

³¹ Plus 42 performances à l'ordre.

³² Plus 7 performances à l'ordre.

production of Circé saw a change in this custom, with tickets for the third row of boxes being made available at an intermediate price of 1 livre 10 sols sixteen performances into the run. What is more, tickets to the parterre were reduced to their lower level after thirty-nine performances, whereas tickets to the amphithéâtre and second row of boxes were maintained au double for sixty-three performances. This practice of reducing the price of parterre tickets early continued from this time on, and on the occasion of the production of Le Triomphe des dames, was extended to include other areas of the house. Thus, after five performances, tickets for the third row of boxes were reduced to 1 livre 10 sols, after ten performances the parterre was reduced à l'ordre, and after fourteen, the amphithéâtre and second and third row of boxes were also reduced à l'ordre; after twenty-three, the first row of boxes followed suit, the théâtre being allowed a further performance au double before being reduced in its turn. Variations on this new practice occurred frequently throughout the remaining period of the Guénégaud's activity. For one year, however, from February 1677 to February 1678 or from Le Festin de pierre to Le Comte d'Essex, tickets au double for the third row of boxes were charged for at a single reduced level of 1 livre 10 sols. They then reverted to their former price of 2 livres, with a dual price scale and then a single 1 livre 10 sols level being applied for the last two productions at the Guénégaud.

A further feature to emerge from this chart is that for the only two plays to be given major revivals at the Guénégaud after the reduction of prices for the stage and first row of boxes, Le Malade imaginaire in 1677-8 and 1678-9 and L'Inconnu in 1678-9 and 1679-80, prices in the most expensive areas of the house were increased while all the others remained à l'ordre. This is particularly interesting in the case of Le Malade imaginaire, for which, during each season, the raised

prices were dropped after a given period of time, only to be raised once more for the next revival.

As far as the length of a play's run au double as an indication of its success is concerned, it is apparent that works by Thomas Corneille far outstripped all others presented at the Guénégaud, with only Pradon's Phèdre et Hippolyte and Boyer's Agamemnon approaching the popularity of Circé, Le Triomphe des dames and La Devineresse.

What can have been the reasoning behind this increase in prices at certain performances? Clearly the Guénégaud troupe wished to take financial advantage of the novelty value of their new works, aware that people would pay more for the privilege of seeing them 'dans leur nouveauté'. The confusion surrounding the raising of the price of tickets to the third row of boxes, however, makes it equally evident that often they were not certain of how best to go about this. Given their understandable desire to make as much money as possible, it is curious that for the first seasons of the Guénégaud's activity, the most expensive areas of the house enjoyed an immunity from the 'double'. Pierre Schaffer in his study of the first seasons of the Guénégaud's activity, puts forward the view that this immunity represented a calculated discrimination in favour of the rich and powerful: 'Faut-il y voir l'expression de prérogatives sociales? Certainement eût-il été difficile de doubler le prix des places réservées à un corps social influent accordant sa protection au théâtre'.³³ This would, however, appear to be contradicted by the fact that once the most expensive seats had been reduced to 3 livres à l'ordre, they began to be raised to 5 livres 10 sols au double; unless, of course, they had been reduced specifically so as to allow more general access to these areas.

³³ 'Un Théâtre parisien sous Louis XIV: l'Hôtel Guénégaud de 1673 à 1677' (unpublished dissertation, University of Paris X, 1979), pp. 17-8.

The raising of prices for performances au double indubitably had a profound impact on the composition of the Guénégaud's audiences. Worst affected were the cheapest areas of the house where prices were doubled. This no doubt had the effect of eliminating certain sections of the public from such performances altogether. Indeed, Schaffer suggests that this may have been precisely the reason for applying the 'double': 'Ce doublement des prix, s'il profitait financièrement à la compagnie, il coïncidait au souci des nobles et des nantis d'exclure les couches sociales traditionnellement vouées au parterre afin d'assister à la pièce dans une ambiance calme et de 'bonne compagnie' (p. 20). If so, this practice would have been unaffected after the reduction in ticket prices for the stage and first row of boxes, at least where the first run of new works and major revivals were concerned, since the operation of the double would have meant that for these performances prices returned to their former prohibitive level.

As we have seen, according to Chappuzeau in Le Théâtre français (p. 109), one of the results of the disturbances occurring at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, the Palais-Royal and the Opera in 1672 and 1673 was a royal decree that no-one might enter the theatre without paying. This does not, however, appear to have been immediately obeyed, for only on 26 February 1675 did the Guénégaud company note in its Registre that during the course of a meeting: 'a été arrêté ledit jour que personne n'entrera plus à l'avenir sans payer à la comédie' (R II, 138 v^o). Each company member was allocated one free ticket, and any others he or she required had to be paid for. Thus, on 24 January 1677 we find the entry: 'Rabattu à M. Champeron pour deux personnes qu'il a fait entrer vendredi de plus que son billet ... 6 livres' (R IV, 116). Similarly, Mlle Molière and Mlle Guyot were each charged for two tickets to L'Inconnu on 1 December 1675, and Champeron for two tickets and La Grange for four to

the same play on 17 March 1676 (R III, 99, 143). Authors, too, seem to have been subject to the same strictures, for on 2 April 1675, M. de l'Isle, better known as Thomas Corneille, is recorded as owing 4 livres for two tickets to his own play Circé (R II, 146).

As a very rare and special favour, highly influential members of the public were allowed to attend performances free of charge. For example, when the Lieutenant de Police, La Reynie occupied a box at a performance of Pradon's Phèdre et Hippolyte on 5 January 1677, he paid 33 livres on 8 January, which were subsequently restored to him on 15 January as a mark of the company's esteem (R IV, 108-9, 112). After a stringent period from February 1675 to January 1677, the company appear to have relaxed their regulations somewhat, for we find no more references to the sale of tickets to company members or authors.

RUN

When a play was first introduced into a company's repertory it was given a series of consecutive performances in order to capitalize on its initial popularity, before entering the repertory to be performed turn and turn about with other works. This practice was motivated by a tradition which laid down that a theatrical company presenting a new work possessed exclusive rights to it up to the time of its publication; thereafter it became available to any troupe wishing to perform it. This custom was reaffirmed by royal ordonnance when, in 1674, the Guénégaud company was forced to appeal to the King, when a provincial company attempted to give a pirated version of the as yet unpublished Le Malade imaginaire:

Sa Majesté étant informée que quelques comédiens de campagne ont surpris, après le décès du sieur Molière, une copie de sa comédie du Malade imaginaire, qu'ils se préparent de donner au public, contre l'usage de tout temps observé entre tous les comédiens du royaume, de n'entreprendre de jouer au préjudice les uns des autres les

pièces qu'ils ont fait accommoder au théâtre, à leurs frais particuliers, pour se récompenser de leurs avances et en tirer les premiers avantages, Sa Majesté fait très-expresses inhibitions et défenses à tous comédiens, autres que ceux de la troupe établie à Paris, rue Mazarine, au faubourg Saint-Germain de sa bonne ville de Paris, de jouer et représenter ladite comédie du Malade imaginaire en quelque manière que ce soit, qu'après qu'elle aura été rendue publique par l'impression qui en sera faite, à peine de 3,000 livres d'amende et de tous dépens, dommages et intérêts.³⁴

As a result, publication was frequently delayed until after this first run. A further indication of a play's success is, therefore, the number of consecutive performances it was given, signifying the length of time it was able to maintain undivided the public interest. It is to the length of this first run that contemporary authors most often refer when making claims as to their play's popularity. Again, however, the matter is not so simple as it is sometimes represented, for, as we have seen, on those occasions when the Guénégaud company was able to perform on all days of the week, the jours ordinaires were considered separately from the jours extraordinaires. Thus, it was possible for the run of a new work to be technically continuous on the jours ordinaires, while actually being interrupted by the performance in repertory of other works on the jours extraordinaires. What is more, when it was imperative that a work be performed at a given time, for example to compete with one on an identical subject performed elsewhere, the first run of another play could be interrupted and the two works performed in repertory.

The following chart shows the length of the first run of works first performed at the Guénégaud and major revivals.

³⁴ Pierre Clément, ed., Lettres, instructions et mémoires de Colbert, 8 vols (Paris, 1868; reprinted Nendeln, 1979), V, 550. 12 livres 15 sols were paid on 4 February 1674 'pour aller quérir l'ordre du Malade imaginaire' (R I, 92).

LENGTH OF INITIAL RUN OF WORKS FIRST PERFORMED AT THE GUENEGAUD AND
MAJOR REVIVALS

PLAY	NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES
<u>Le Comédien poète</u>	18
<u>La Mort d'Achilles</u>	9 ³⁵
<u>Trigaudin</u>	9
<u>Le Malade imaginaire</u> (1674-5)	38
" (1677-8)	10
" (1678-9)	6
<u>Panurge</u>	11 ³⁶
<u>Dom César d'Avalos</u>	14
<u>Circé</u>	22 ³⁷
<u>Iphigénie</u>	5 ³⁸
<u>L'Inconnu</u>	28
<u>Coriolan</u>	18
<u>Le Volontaire (petite pièce)</u>	5 ³⁹
<u>Le Triomphe des dames</u>	7 ⁴⁰

³⁵ La Grange only records eight successive performances of this work (Registre, I, 154-5).

³⁶ These were interrupted on Friday 24 August 1674 by a performance^a of Le Misanthrope. No reason is given in the Registres, but this may have been a consequence of the trip to perform Le Malade imaginaire before the King at Versailles on the previous Tuesday (La Grange, Registre, I, 162).

³⁷ After these twenty-two consecutive performances, Circé was then given in repertory with the Iphigénie of Le Clerc and Coras which had originally been intended to rival with that of Racine at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, and the production of which had already been considerably delayed. If we discount this, the performances of other works on certain of the jours extraordinaires and the unexplained performance of L'Ecole des maris on Tuesday 2 July, Circé can be said to have enjoyed a run of seventy-six performances. This thus qualifies De Visé's claim that, 'Le succès de cette pièce fut si prodigieux qu'elle fut jouée sans interruption depuis le commencement du Carême jusqu'au mois de septembre' (Mercure galant (January 1710), p. 285).

³⁸ In repertory with Circé.

³⁹ It was the custom for petites pièces being given for the first time to be performed consecutively, while the older works they accompanied were changed.

⁴⁰ Performances of this work were interrupted on 23 and 25 August, and suspended from 6 September to 17 November 1676 on account of the illness of Mlle Molière (La Grange, Registre, I, 187-8; Gazette d'Amsterdam (3 November 1676), otherwise the number of consecutive performances would have been twenty-six.

<u>Phèdre et Hippolyte</u>	16 ⁴¹
<u>Le Festin de pierre</u>	12 ⁴²
<u>Electre</u>	8
<u>La Dame médecin</u>	15
<u>Le Comte d'Essex</u>	8
<u>Le Cavalier par amour</u>	5
<u>La Princesse de Clèves</u>	2
<u>Le Gentilhomme meunier (petite pièce)</u>	6
<u>La Devineresse</u>	47
<u>Agamemnon</u>	20 ⁴³
<u>La Bassette</u>	8
<u>Les Carosses d'Orléans (petite pièce)</u>	7 ⁴⁴

John Lough, in Paris Theatre Audiences in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, writes of the first run of new plays that:

... 10 to 15 performances represented a modest but definite success; 15 to 22 or 23 was a very considerable figure. Twenty-four or so to 30 meant a very striking success, while figures in the 30's and 40's were altogether exceptional. In fact, only three new plays achieved the phenomenal success of 30 or more performances in the whole period from 1680 to 1701 and only two in the period from 1701 to 1715. (p. 52)

At the Guénégaud, however, Le Malade imaginaire, Circé and La Devineresse can all be said to fall into this exclusive category; L'Inconnu, Le Triomphe des dames and Phèdre et Hippolyte could be said to have enjoyed 'very striking success'; Le Comédien poète, Coriolan, La Dame médecin and Agamemnon, 'considerable' success; and Panurge, Dom César d'Avalos, Le Festin de pierre, and even Le Malade imaginaire at its revival of 1677-8, 'modest but definite success'. This, then, is a

⁴¹ This work was then performed in repertory with Thomas Corneille's Le Festin de pierre; otherwise the total number of consecutive performances would have been twenty-five.

⁴² In repertory with Pradon's Phèdre et Hippolyte.

⁴³ As we have seen, performances of this work were interrupted by others on the jours extraordinaires.

⁴⁴ Up to the foundation of the Comédie-Française, otherwise eleven (La Grange, Registre, I, 244).

far cry from the traditionally held view of the Guénégaud as a feeble successor to the glories of Molière's troupe.⁴⁵

COURT PERFORMANCES

Evidence of this supposed inferiority of the Guénégaud troupe in relation to that of Molière is often considered to be provided by a comparison of the number of performances given at Court by the two companies. The part played by Molière in Court entertainments is well known.⁴⁶ According to John Lough, however, the actors of the Guénégaud troupe 'n'ont paru qu'une seule fois à la cour'.⁴⁷ Daspit de Saint-Amand, records of such visits that:

Le registre de La Grange, qui les mentionne si exactement, porte à l'actif de l'année 1674, écrite en marge et en regard de la date du 6 juillet, cette mention: Voyage à la cour.

Puis, entre le 19 et le 24 août suivant, l'inscription: Mardi néant. A Versailles pour le Roi. Et c'est tout!⁴⁸

In fact, ~~without denying that~~ ^{although clearly} the Guénégaud troupe did not enjoy royal favour to nearly the same extent as that of Molière, both Lough and Saint-Amand seriously underestimate the number of visites made by this company.

Entertaining the King and his Court is one of the chief duties of a theatrical company as outlined by Chappuzeau: 'Le soin principal des

⁴⁵ See, for example, Karl Mantzius, Molière: les théâtres, le public et les comédiens de son temps, translated by Maurice Pellisson (Paris, 1908), p. 274.

⁴⁶ See Pierre Mélése, 'Molière à la cour', XVII^e Siècle, 98-9 (1973), pp. 57-65.

⁴⁷ 'Représentations théâtrales à la cour depuis Henri IV', Cahiers de l'Association Internationale des Etudes Françaises, 9 (1957), pp. 161-71 (p. 163).

⁴⁸ 'Les Visites des comédiens à la cour et chez les courtisans', Le Moniteur du Bibliophile (1 August 1880), pp. 161-74 (pp. 173-4).

comédiens est de bien faire leur cour chez le Roi, de qui ils dépendent, non seulement comme sujets, mais aussi comme étant particulièrement à Sa Majesté, qui les entretient à son service, et leur paye régulièrement leurs pensions' (p. 106).⁴⁹ Indeed, his entire apologia of the theatrical profession is based on the favour shown to its members by the King:

Mais une des plus fortes raisons qui doit porter toute la France à vouloir du bien aux comédiens, est le plaisir qu'ils donnent au Roi pour le délasser quelques heures de ses grandes et héroïques occupations. Qui aime son Roi aime ses plaisirs; et qui aime ses plaisirs aime ceux qui les lui donnent, et qui ne sont pas des moins nécessaires à l'Etat. (p. 93)

Chappuzeau goes on to describe how visits by companies of actors to the Court were organized:

Ils sont tenus d'aller au Louvre quand le Roi les mande, et on leur fournit de carrosses autant qu'il en est besoin. Mais quand ils marchent à Saint-Germain, à Chambord, à Versailles, ou en d'autres lieux, outre leur pension qui court toujours, outre les carrosses, chariots et chevaux qui leur sont fournis de l'Ecurie, ils ont de gratification en commun mille écus par mois, chacun deux écus par jour pour leur dépense, leurs gens à proportion, et leurs logements par fourriers. En représentant la comédie, il est ordonné de chez le Roi à chacun des acteurs et des actrices, à Paris ou ailleurs, été et hiver, trois pièces de bois, une bouteille de vin, un pain, et deux bougies blanches pour le Louvre; et à Saint-Germain un flambeau pesant deux livres; ce qui leur est apporté ponctuellement par les Officiers de la Fruiterie, sur les registres de laquelle est couchée une collation de vingt-cinq écus tous les jours que les comédiens représentent chez le Roi, étant alors commensaux. (pp. 106-7)

The King's order^s to appear at Court were transmitted to the troupe by M. Duché, the Intendant des Menus-Plaisirs du Roi. An example of such an order dating from some months after the foundation of the

⁴⁹ In fact, as we have seen, the Guénégaud company was not in receipt of a pension from the King, and, far from being paid promptly, the pension for Molière's last season at the Palais-Royal was only received on 6 July 1674 (R II, 39).

Comédie-Française is reproduced by Charles Montjean in his article 'La Troupe de Molière à Saint-Germain-en-Laye au XVII^e siècle':

Je prie Monsieur de La Grange de prendre la peine d'avertir ce soir la troupe de se tenir prête pour aller demain à Saint-Germain jouer: Oedipe (de Corneille) et Le Mariage forcé. Je viens de donner l'ordre de fournir six carrosses et une charrette. La charrette sera demain matin à sept heures à Guénégaud et les carrosses à dix. Je suis son très humble et très obéissant serviteur. Signé: Duché. (p. 159)⁵⁰

Duché was one of the people the remainder of Molière's company is recorded as having gone to see during the negotiations prior to the leasing of the Guénégaud theatre.⁵¹ A further journey to see him was made on behalf of the Guénégaud company in 1675, for the expenses of which 1 livre 10 sols were paid on 25 July (R III, 40).

The Registres of the Guénégaud company contain many references to trips made by the company to Court, most usually at Versailles or Saint-Germain-en-Laye, or to the homes of members of the nobility. Although it is sometimes specified that these were for 'affaires' or 'sollicitations', it is frequently difficult to determine whether or not others were in order to perform. Where there is an element of doubt, it has been indicated in the comments below. Certain of these performances are not listed by La Grange, which is why they have hitherto escaped attention. The first of these references are as follows:

3 November 1673 - Frais extraordinaires d'un voyage à Versailles ... 18 livres 7 sols (R I, 55)⁵²

⁵⁰ A further two letters from Duché to La Grange dated 5 and 12 January 1681 are published by Thierry in the introduction to his edition of the latter's Registre (Thierry, Documents, p. 310).

⁵¹ Thierry, Documents, p. 306.

⁵² The fact that these expenses are referred to as 'frais extraordinaires', a term almost invariably used in a performance context, suggests that this might have been a visite. There is, however, no such reference in La Grange's Registre.

14 January 1674 - Frais extraordinaires du voyage à Saint-Germain pour la représentation d'Achille et George Dandin ... 17 livres 14 sols (R I, 84)⁵³

8 June 1674 - Donné pour les frais de la visite ... 20 livres 5 sols - Rapporté vingt louis d'or d'une visite - Part avec la visite ... 15 livres 10 sols (R II, 27)⁵⁴

17 June 1674 - Assistants pour la visite de Tartuffe ... 15 sols (R II, 31)⁵⁵

20 July 1674 - Pour les crocheteurs qui ont été à Versailles ... 9 livres (R II, 45)⁵⁶

To these could be added the 'voyage à la cour' of 6 July 1674 recorded by La Grange and noted by Daspit de Saint-Amand.⁵⁷ This is entered in the Guénégaud Registres with no destination being specified. Given this lack of detail, it would seem more likely that it was a business trip.

⁵³ Thomas Corneille's tragedy, La Mort d'Achille, was, according to the Gazette de France, performed at Saint-Germain on 13 January 1674 (20 January 1674). There is no record of this performance in La Grange's Registre.

⁵⁴ See La Grange, Registre, I, 160.

⁵⁵ Rather than referring to separate private performance, I would suggest that this represents a delayed payment of expenses owing from the visite of 8 June 1674.

⁵⁶ This payment no doubt refers to the performance of Le Malade imaginaire given at Versailles on 19 July 1674 as part of the entertainment offered to the Court by the King on his return from the Franche-Comté. Payment for this visite was not made until 26 April 1675, on which date it was noted in the Guénégaud Registres that after the day's performance 600 livres remained in the hands of M. Dauvilliers 'que M. Hubert a reçues du Trésor Royal pour la représentation du Malade imaginaire devant Leurs Majestés l'année passée' (R III, 2). Curiously, in his personal Registre, La Grange records this performance as having taken place on Tuesday 21 August 1674, stating that on that day there was no play given in Paris, the company having been 'à Versailles pour le Roi', and noting in the margin: 'On joua Le Malade imaginaire. Reçu 600 livres en avril 1675 employés aux frais de Circé' (I, 162). In the Guénégaud Registres it is merely stated of this date: 'Point joué mardi' (R II, 59). Félibien, in his account of the Divertissements of 1674, states quite clearly that the performance of Molière's work took place on the third day, 19 July (André Félibien, Recueil de descriptions de peintures et d'autres ouvrages faits pour le Roi (Paris, 1689), pp. 405-6).

⁵⁷ Registre, I, 161.

The presentation of Le Malade imaginaire given at Versailles in July 1674 is the best known of all the Guénégaud company's private performances. It took place on the third day of the festivities, which also included the performance of Lully's opera Alceste in the Cour de Marbre, his Fêtes de l'Amour et de Bacchus in the Bassin du Dragon, and Racine's Iphigénie by the Hôtel de Bourgogne company in the Orangerie.⁵⁸ The third day began with a collation in the Menagerie and a boat trip on the canal:

Ensuite de cela le Roi descendit à la tête du canal, étant entré dans sa calèche alla au théâtre que l'on avait dressé devant la Grotte <de Thétis> pour la représentation du Malade imaginaire, dernier ouvrage du sieur Molière.

L'aspect de la Grotte servait de fond à ce théâtre élevé de deux pieds et demi de terre. Le frontispice était une grande corniche architravée, soutenue aux deux extrémités par deux massifs avec des ornements rustiques, et semblables à ceux qui paraissaient au dehors de la Grotte. Dans chaque massif il y avait deux niches, où sur des piédestaux on voyait deux figures représentant d'un côté Hercule tenant sa massue, et terrassant l'Hydre; et de l'autre côté Apollon appuyé sur son arc, et foulant aux pieds le serpent Python.

Au-dessus de la corniche s'élevait un fronton, dont le tympan était rempli des armes du Roi.

Sept grands lustres pendaient sur le devant du théâtre qui était avancé au devant des trois portes de la Grotte. Les côtés étaient ornés d'une agréable feuillée; mais au travers des portes où le théâtre continuait de s'étendre, l'on voyait que la Grotte même lui servait de principale décoration. Elle était éclairée d'une quantité de girandoles de cristal posées sur des guéridons d'or et d'azur, et d'une infinité d'autres lumières qu'on avait mises sur les corniches et sur toutes les autres saillies.

La table de marbre qui est au milieu était environnée de quantité de festons de fleurs, et chargée d'une grande corbeille de même.

Au fond des trois ouvertures l'on voyait les trois grandes niches où sont ces groupes de figures de marbre blanc, dont la beauté du sujet, et l'excellence du travail font une des grandes richesses de ce lieu.

Dans la niche du milieu, Apollon est représenté assis, et environné des Nymphes de Thétis qui le parfument; et dans les deux autres sont ses chevaux avec des Tritons qui les pansent.

⁵⁸ Marie-Christine Moine, Les Fêtes à la cour du Roi Soleil 1653-1715 (Paris, 1984), pp. 46-7.

Du haut de la niche du milieu tombe derrière les figures une grande nappe d'eau qui sort de l'urne que tient un fleuve couché sur une roche. Cette eau qui s'est répandue au pied des figures dans un grand bassin de marbre, retombe ensuite jusqu'en bas par grandes nappes, partie entières, et partie déchirées; et des niches où sont les chevaux, il tombe pareillement des nappes d'eau qui font des chutes admirables. Mais toutes ces cascades étant alors éclairées d'une infinité de bougies qu'on ne voyait pas, faisaient des effets d'autant plus merveilleux et plus surprenants, qu'il n'y avait point de goutte d'eau qui ne brillât du feu de tant de lumières, et qui ne renvoyât autant de clarté qu'elle en recevait.

Ce fut à la vue d'une si agréable décoration que les comédiens de la Troupe du Roi représentèrent Le Malade imaginaire, dont Leurs Majestés et toute la Cour ne reçurent pas moins de plaisir qu'elles en ont toujours eu aux pièces de son auteur.⁵⁹

There followed a gap of some five years during which the Guénégaud troupe is not recorded as having performed at Court. Moreover, it is noted in the company's Registres that on two occasions they paid the expenses of a trip to Versailles, 'pour solliciter de jouer Le Triomphe des dames à la Cour et présenter les livres au Roi, à la Reine, <et à> Monseigneur le Dauphin'. These appeals evidently met with no success, and the company were further embarrassed when they borrowed money from Dauvilliers, 'pour un voyage à Versailles, la troupe y étant appelée par M. Boileau, Contrôleur de l'Argenterie du Roi, pour représenter devant le Roi. Ce qui n'eut point d'effet parce qu'on demanda Dom César d'Avalos qui ne put être représenté' (R IV, 97 v°).

It was not until 1679 that the Guénégaud troupe is next recorded as having begun a series of private performances. The references to these in the Registres are as follows:

⁵⁹ Félibien, Recueil, pp. 405-9.

14 February 1679 - Plus reçu d'une visite de Tartuffe et George Dandin chez Mme la Comtesse de Quintin ... 352 livres (R VI, 149)⁶⁰

9 September 1679 - On n'a point joué le jeudi 7^e septembre à cause de la visite de M. l'Ambassadeur d'Espagne (R VII, 68)
- Partagé la visite de Phèdre et du Sicilien représentés chez M. l'Ambassadeur d'Espagne le jeudi 7^e décembre pour laquelle visite il a donné six cents soixante livres partagées en quinze ci 44 livres chacune part (R VII, 69 v^o)⁶¹

13 September 1679 - On n'a point joué mardi 12^e septembre à cause de la visite de Monseigneur de Colbert (R VII, 71)
- Ce jourd'hui lundi 18^e septembre 1679 on a reçu quarante louis d'or pour la visite de Mithridate et de L'Amour médecin qui furent représentés à Sceaux chez Monsieur Colbert le mardi 12^e dudit mois, lesquels ont été partagés en quinze qui est pour chaque part trente livres (R VII, 75 v^o)⁶²

- Le lundi 12^e février 1680 on a reçu quatre-vingts louis d'or pour les deux comédies représentées chez Monseigneur le Duc, à savoir l'Amphitryon le jeudi 8^e de ce mois et le vendredi 9^e L'Ecole des femmes, lesquels quatre-vingts louis d'or ont été partagés en quinze (R VII, 148 v^o)⁶³

⁶⁰ La Grange has, 'Visite chez Mme de Quintin. Rue de Taranne. Tartuffe et George Dandin. Reçu trente louis ... 330 livres' (Registre, I, 215).

⁶¹ La Grange has, 'Jeudi 7 on n'a point joué à cause que la compagnie a été en visite chez M. l'Ambassadeur d'Espagne à l'Hôtel de Nevers ou Mazarin. On joua Phèdre et Sicilien. Reçu 660 livres' (Registre, I, 223). A brief account of this entertainment was published entitled Relation de la fête que Son Excellence M. le marquis de Los Balbasez, Ambassadeur Extraordinaire de S.M. Catholique a donné à la Reine d'Espagne dans le Palais où il est logé à Paris (Paris, 1679), giving the titles of the works presented and stating that Italian music was performed during the entr'actes. It no doubt formed part of the festivities surrounding the betrothal of Marie-Louise d'Orléans to Charles II of Spain which took place by proxy in Paris on 30 August 1679. Further celebrations were held at Fontainebleau on 14 September, prior to the bride's departure for Spain on 20 September (Henry Kamen, Spain in the Later Seventeenth Century 1665-1700 (London, 1983), first published New York, 1980, p. 372).

⁶² La Grange notes, 'Mardi 12 la compagnie alla à Sceaux pour Monseigneur Colbert jouer Mithridate et Les Médecins. Reçu 440 livres' (Registre, I, 224).

⁶³ La Grange has, 'Lundi 12 février on a reçu 80 louis d'or de Mgr. le Duc pour deux visites à l'Hôtel de Condé, l'une d'Amphitryon l'autre de L'Ecole des femmes' (Registre, I, 230).

It is clear then that, although entertaining the nobility rather more frequently than it has hitherto been thought, the Guénégaud company was not called upon to participate in court festivities to anything like the same extent as that of Molière. Nor was it as popular as Lully's opera, the Italian troupe or the company of the Hôtel de Bourgogne.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, they do appear to have been enjoying something of a revival in their fortunes in the last seasons of their activity. What is more, members of the nobility frequently attended performances at the Guénégaud itself, as we shall see when considering the theatre's audiences.

⁶⁴ All of Lully's operas composed in this period, with the exception of Psyché, were given at Court as well as in Paris, with four being given their premières there (Ariane Ducrot, 'Les Représentations de l'Académie Royale de Musique à Paris au temps de Louis XIV', Recherches sur la musique française classique, 10 (1970). pp. 19-55 (pp. 26-7). The Italian troupe, as we have seen, spent considerable periods at Fontainebleau when the Court was in residence, and the Hôtel de Bourgogne company, too, played a significant part in court entertainments, most notably at Fontainebleau in 1677 (Mercure galant, October 1677, 201-2).

CHAPTER FIVE - REPERTORY

Having looked at the founding, design and administration of the Guénégaud theatre, and the way in which plays were selected and produced there, we will now turn to consider the results of this selection process.

SIZE

The Guénégaud was essentially a repertory theatre, performing in the course of each season a combination of new and old plays. The theatrical season in the seventeenth century ran from Easter to Easter with a short break in-between. The Guénégaud was in operation during eight theatrical seasons of which the first was incomplete, running from when the theatre opened in July 1673 to Easter 1674, as was the last, running from Easter 1680 to the foundation of the Comédie-Française in August 1680. During the eight seasons of its existence, eighty-seven different plays were performed at the Guénégaud. Of these, twenty-three or approximately 26% were premières. The remaining sixty-four plays, or approximately 73% of the total repertory were revivals. If the number of premières presented remained more or less constant at three per season throughout the period of the Guénégaud's activity, rising to four during the course of 1675-6 and dropping to two in 1678-9 and 1680-1, the same cannot be said of the total number of plays performed each season. In 1673-4, the Guénégaud company performed twenty different plays. This figure dropped to eighteen in 1674-5 and 1675-6, but then rose steadily to twenty-eight in 1676-7, thirty-eight in 1677-8 and forty-eight in 1678-9, thereafter remaining fairly constant, with forty-nine plays performed in 1679-80 and forty-eight in 1680-1.

One possible reason for such an increase in the number of plays presented could have been that the company were giving more performances per season and so required a larger repertory of plays on which to draw. Certainly, the number of performances given in a season could vary considerably. For example, when the Italians with whom they shared their theatre, were away from the capital, performing either at court or in England, the members of the Guénégaud troupe sometimes took the opportunity to perform on the jours extraordinaires. On the other hand, the number of performances given per season could also be reduced as a result of external factors, as when the theatres were forced to close early in the year for the papal jubilee declared by Clement X, which ran from February to April 1677.¹ The performances per season at the Guénégaud were as follows: 108 in the late-starting 1673-4 season; 145 in 1674-5; 146 in 1675-6; 131 in 1676-7, the season of the papal jubilee; 144 in 1677-8; 163 in 1678-9, when the Italians were at Fontainebleau in August and September; 179 in 1679-80, when they were there from August to October; and 77 in 1680-1, up to the foundation of the Comédie-Française in August.

When these figures are considered in relation to those for the number of plays performed each season, it is the seasons 1676-7 and 1680-1 that are the most interesting. In 1676-7, despite the fact that the number of performances dropped to 131, the number of plays performed increased from eighteen to twenty-eight, and in 1680-1, when there were only seventy-seven performances at the Guénégaud, forty-eight different plays were given. It would seem clear, then, that there is no correlation between the number of performances given in a season and the number of plays performed. The increase in the size of the repertory did, however, have one significant impact on the way in which plays were

¹ La Fontaine, Oeuvres diverses, p. 961 (notes to p. 617).

presented at the Guénégaud: namely that after 1675-6, as more plays were introduced to the repertory, the number of double-bills given per season also increased. 18% of the performances given at the Guénégaud were double-bills in 1673-4, dropping to 8% in 1674-5, then rising again to 12% in 1675-6. This figure continued to rise to 26% in 1676-7, 36% in 1677-8, 37% in 1678-9, 41% in 1679-80, finally peaking at 60% in 1680-1. This increase in the number of double-bills would seem to go hand-in-hand with that in the size of the repertory, and both would seem indicative of a desire on the part of the Guénégaud troupe to attract the public by means of more varied programmes.

PREMIERES

As previously mentioned, twenty-three premières were given at the Guénégaud - approximately 26% of the total repertory. These were: Thomas Corneille's La Mort d'Achilles, Montfleury's Trigaudin, and Le Comédien poète on which Montfleury and Thomas Corneille collaborated in 1673-4; Montauban's Les Aventures de Panurge, Thomas Corneille's Dom César d'Avalos and Circé in 1674-5; Iphigénie by Le Clerc and Coras, Abeille's Coriolan, Thomas Corneille's L'Inconnu and Rosimond's petite pièce, Le Volontaire in 1675-6; Pradon's Phèdre et Hippolyte, Thomas Corneille's Le Triomphe des dames and his verse adaptation of Molière's Dom Juan, Le Festin de pierre in 1676-7; Pradon's Electre, Boyer's Le Comte d'Essex and Montfleury's La Dame médecin in 1677-8; Thomas Corneille's La Devineresse, the anonymous Le Gentilhomme meunier and Agamemnon, attributed to Pader d'Assezan in the Registres but claimed by Boyer, in 1679-80;² and, finally, Champmeslé's La Bassette and Les Carosses

² Lancaster, History, IV, 155-6.

d'Orléans, also credited to Champmeslé in the Registres but probably actually by La Chappelle, in 1680-1.³

The part played by the premières presented by the Guénégaud company in their success has been penetratingly studied by Guy Boquet in his article 'Naissance d'une troupe: genèse d'un répertoire'.⁴ He discerns three different phases in the Guénégaud's production policy as demonstrated by these premières: firstly a search for a comic playwright to replace Molière, largely centering around the figures of Montfleury and Thomas Corneille; secondly Thomas Corneille's enormously successful series of spectacular productions, comprising Circé, L'Inconnu, Le Triomphe des dames and La Devineresse; and, finally, the 'guerre des tragédies' in which the Guénégaud competed openly with the Hôtel de Bourgogne, producing an Iphigénie and a Phèdre to rival those of Racine, and a Le Comte d'Essex to rival that of Thomas Corneille. These phases in production policy can be seen, however, to have applied not only to those premières presented at the Guénégaud, but also to the selection of revivals.

REVIVALS

Revivals in the seventeenth century theatre could be of two kinds. On the one hand there were major revivals, by which works were given a number of consecutive performances in the manner of a first run, and for which certain seat prices were often raised. Only two plays were given this type of revival at the Guénégaud: Le Malade imaginaire and L'Inconnu. On the other hand, there was what can be described as the 'bread and butter' repertory of the troupe, consisting of works which were no longer major attractions performed in rotation.

³ Ibid., p. 453.

⁴ Guy Boquet, 'Naissance d'une troupe: genèse d'un répertoire', Revue d'histoire du théâtre, 32 (1980), pp. 105-26.

In Le Théâtre français, Chappuzeau defines a répertoire as 'une liste de vieilles pièces, pour entretenir le théâtre durant les chaleurs de l'été et les promenades de l'automne, et n'être pas obligés, tous les soirs qu'on représente, de délibérer à la hâte et en tumulte de la pièce qu'on doit annoncer' (pp. 109-10). Since it was rare for a company to give more than three or four new plays per season, this repertory of old plays would have been of capital importance, furnishing as it did the greater part of their activity. One could contend, therefore, that the study of the revivals presented by a company is equally or possibly even more revealing of its production policy than that of the premières they elected to present. Unfortunately, we have no such répertoire relating to the period of the Guénégaud's activity. There is, however, a reference in the Registres to one having been drawn up in March 1677 (R IV, 133), and an extant example of some years later is the Répertoire des comédies françaises qui se peuvent jouer en 1685, published by H.C. Lancaster.

As we have seen, twenty-three of the eighty-seven different plays presented at the Guénégaud were premières. The remaining sixty-four, or approximately 73% were revivals, with contributions coming from a variety of different sources: the repertory of Molière's troupe, including both his own plays and those by other authors presented by his company in the past; the repertory of the Marais troupe, brought by those actors who had joined the Guénégaud company in 1673; and, perhaps most interestingly, the repertory of the Guénégaud's rival company at the Hôtel de Bourgogne.

Marais

As the Guénégaud was an almost equal fusion of actors from Molière's troupe and that of the Marais, one might have expected that the two groups' contributions to the Guénégaud repertory would have been

similarly equal. This, however, was far from being the case. In the first season of the Guénégaud's activity, as compared to thirteen plays from the repertory of Molière's troupe, only four were performed from that of the Marais, all of which had been given their first performance the previous season: Montfleury's L'Ambigu comique, Pierre Corneille's Pulchérie, Boursault's Les Amours de Germanicus for which the author had not yet been paid,⁵ and Montfleury's petite pièce Le Semblable à soi-même, one of the comic intermèdes with which the tragedy of Dido is interspersed in L'Ambigu comique.⁶ A further three petites pièces from the Marais repertory were added in subsequent seasons: Rosimond's L'Avocat sans étude in 1675-6, Montfleury's Dom Pasquin d'Avalos, again taken from L'Ambigu comique in 1676-7, and Rosimond's La Dupe amoureuse in 1678-9; as was Thomas Corneille's La Comtesse d'Orgueil in 1677-8.⁷

Although these were the only works performed exclusively by the Marais troupe to pass into the Guénégaud repertory, they were not the only plays previously presented at that theatre to do so. A further eleven plays which had been performed at the Marais were added to the repertory of the Guénégaud company in the last five seasons of its activity. Eight of these had also been performed by Molière's troupe: in 1677-8 were added Thomas Corneille's Dom Bertrand de Cigarral, Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin's Les Visionnaires, and Tristan l'Hermite's La Mariane; in 1678-9, Boisrobert's La Folle Gageure and Guérin de Bouscal's Le

⁵ Monval, 'Affaire Auzillon', p. 84.

⁶ For a list of plays first performed at the Marais 1629-73 see Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, II, 217-20.

⁷ This play is widely believed to have been first performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, as were all Thomas Corneille's other works produced between 1660 and 1672. However, according to Christopher J. Gossip ('Vers une chronologie des pièces de Thomas Corneille', Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, 74 (1974), pp. 665-78, 1038-58; p. 1046), in the registration of its privilège, it is specifically stated that it had been given at the Marais.

Gouvernement de Sanche Pansa; and in 1679-80, Pierre Corneille's Le Cid, Rodogune and Cinna. Several of these works had also formed part of the repertory of the Hôtel de Bourgogne (Dom Bertrand de Cigarral, Les Visicnnaires, La Folle Gageure, Le Cid and Rodogune), as had two other plays to enter the Guénégaud repertory from that of the Marais, though in this case without ever having been performed by Molière's troupe: Pierre Corneille's Médée, added in 1676-7, and his Polyeucte in 1680-1.⁸ A third play, Quinault's Agrippa, roi d'Albe, was also performed by both the Marais and Hôtel de Bourgogne companies and then passed into the Guénégaud repertory without ever having been performed by Molière's troupe. This is somewhat different from the two examples above, however, in that it was first performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1660/1, and then revived at the Marais in 1669.⁹ It will, therefore, be considered in the section on works coming from the repertory of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, although it is, of course, impossible to be absolutely certain as to which of these factors most contributed to its revival at the Guénégaud.

Given that the Marais company appears to have made only a small contribution to the Guénégaud repertory, with a mere ten of the

⁸ La Folle Gageure was first performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1652 and revived at the Marais in 1659/60 (Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 71; Marais, II, 114). The other works, with the exception of Dom Bertrand de Cigarral, were all revived at the Hôtel de Bourgogne between 1642 and 1647 (Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 51-2). Dom Bertrand de Cigarral, Le Cid, Rodogune and Polyeucte are all listed in the Michel Laurent section of the Mémoire de Mahelot (Le Mémoire de Mahelot, Laurent et d'autres décorateurs de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne et de la Comédie-Française au XVII^e siècle, edited by Henry Carrington Lancaster (Paris, 1920), pp. 109-15), and, according to Deierkauf-Holsboer, were all, therefore, revived at the Hôtel de Bourgogne between 1673 and 1678 (Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 164).

⁹ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 107; Pierre Mèlèse, Répertoire analytique des documents contemporains d'information et de critique concernant le théâtre à Paris sous Louis XIV, 1659-1715 (Paris, 1934), p. 115.

Guénégaud's sixty-four revivals coming from its repertory alone, it is doubtful that these plays of joint origin were revived solely on account of their having formed part of the Marais repertory, and their inclusion in that of the Guénégaud probably owes more to their having been performed either by Molière's troupe or that of the Hôtel de Bourgogne. Of these works, Cinna is a particularly interesting case in that it was in the repertory of the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1677-8, during the period of the 'guerre des tragédies',¹⁰ and was revived at the Guénégaud in 1679-80, following the move there of the Hôtel de Bourgogne's leading tragic actress, Mlle Champmeslé. It would seem likely, therefore, that this play's revival at the latter theatre owed more to these events than to its having belonged to the repertories of Molière's troupe and the Marais in the past.

One reason that the Marais made such a small contribution to the Guénégaud repertory may have been that their greatest recent successes had been with the production of machine plays. It was rare, however, for these to be performed in repertory with other works, since this would have involved the intermittent hiring of large numbers of supernumerary assistants and stage-hands, as well as the moving on and off stage every two or three days of large and complicated elements of scenery and stage machinery. As a result, they were generally dropped from the repertory once their initial popularity had faded, only rarely enjoying the luxury of a large-scale revival. Moreover, music played a vital part in these spectacular productions, and, as we have seen, Lully, jealous of his privilège, had had it stipulated in April 1673 that no company of actors should be allowed to employ more than two singers and six

¹⁰ Mercure galant (October 1677), p. 202. Cinna had, in fact, been performed by the Hôtel de Bourgogne as early as some time between 1642 and 1647 (Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 52).

instrumentalists on any of their productions.¹¹ All of this contributed to making the presentation of the Marais's machine plays more difficult. Nevertheless, despite the limited size of their contribution, for the first three seasons of the Guénégaud's activity, the only additions to its repertory other than premières and plays by Molière came from that of the Marais.

Molière's troupe

As might be expected, plays by Molière formed the backbone of the Guénégaud repertory, providing between 40% and 72% of all the works performed in a given season. The fact that plays by Molière continued to enjoy such a prominent place in the Guénégaud's programmes, and that so many of them continued directly on into the repertory of the Comédie-Française, is entirely due to the pains the Guénégaud troupe took to safeguard their Molière inheritance, and the skill with which they capitalized on the assets he had left them. There were two major ways in which this was done. Firstly, the company attempted to use those plays they had in their possession tactically so as to stir up greater interest and enthusiasm in their audiences. This was done by focussing attention each season on a particular play or plays, giving them more performances than the others, and with the interest sometimes being intensified by their having been held back and not performed at all for one or two seasons previously. Secondly, the troupe delved deep into their stockpile of plays by Molière and revived those which had not been seen on the Parisian stage for some time.¹²

¹¹ Delamare, Traité, I, 474-5.

¹² For further details of how this was done, and of the place occupied by Molière's works in the Guénégaud repertory see my article, 'Molière at the Guénégaud Theatre 1673-1680', Seventeenth Century French Studies, 8 (1986), pp. 177-84.

The assets of the Guénégaud company included not only Molière's own plays, but also works by other authors presented by his company in the past. In 1676-7, the Guénégaud troupe apparently took the decision to increase the size of its repertory. Initially, it succeeded in doing so by reviving still more plays by Molière and works it had performed during earlier seasons and subsequently dropped. 1677-8 saw a change of policy as the company extended its tactic of digging deep into the repertory of Molière's troupe to include not only his works but also plays by other authors. Thus, the Guénégaud produced that season Thomas Corneille's Dom Bertrand de Cigarral, Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin's Les Visionnaires, Tristan l'Hermite's La Mariane, Montauban's Les Charmes de Félicie and Subligny's Le Désespoir extravagant. In 1678-9 they added Boisrobert's La Folle Gageure, Du Ryer's Scevole, the anonymous Le Fin/Feint Lourdaud, Scarron's L'Héritier ridicule, Guérin de Bouscal's Le Gouvernement de Sanche Pansa and Pierre Corneille's Tite et Bérénice.¹³

¹³ Some confusion exists concerning the authorship of certain of the plays revived at the Guénégaud, due to the practice of only entering abbreviated titles in the Registres. Thus we find references to Phèdre and Bérénice without it being specified in each case whether the works in question are those of Racine or Pradon's Phèdre et Hippolyte and Pierre Corneille's Tite et Bérénice. B.W. and G.P. Young in their edition of La Grange's Registre, assume arbitrarily that all performances prior to the founding of the Comédie-Française were of Pradon and Pierre Corneille's plays, and that all those after were of Racine's. For my part, I am inclined to agree with Sylvie Chevalley's conclusions concerning 'Les deux Bérénice', that all performances prior to Mlle Champmeslé joining the Guénégaud company were of Pierre Corneille's work, and that all those after were of Racine's (Revue d'histoire du théâtre, 22 (1970), pp. 91-124, p. 94). It is highly likely that this was also the case for 'Les deux Phèdre'. A confusion of a different kind concerns the authorship of Les Coups de l'amour et de la fortune, revived at the Guénégaud in 1677-8, since both Quinault and Boisrobert wrote plays with similar titles. Given the lack of evidence, I have assumed the work in question to be that of Quinault, since his plays appear to have been particularly popular as revivals in this period.

As we have seen, certain of these plays had also formed part of the repertory of the Marais company. Others featured in that of the Hôtel de Bourgogne (Les Charmes de Félicie, Scevole and L'Héritier ridicule),¹⁴ and several were common to the repertories of all three companies (Dom Bertrand de Cigarral, Les Visionnaires, La Mariane and La Folle Gageure). This, of course, poses the question of whether these plays were revived at the Guénégaud solely on account of their having formed part of Molière's troupe, or whether their performance by either of the other two companies was also a contributing factor. Certainly, two of these works had only recently been revived at the Hôtel de Bourgogne (Dom Bertrand de Cigarral and Scevole both formed part of the repertory there in the period between 1673 and 1678),¹⁵ and this may well have played a part in their revival at the Guénégaud. A third play, La Mariane, was also performed by the Hôtel de Bourgogne company in 1677-8,¹⁶ but this revival was somewhat unusual and will be discussed later, as will that of Dom Bertrand de Cigarral. Nevertheless, leaving aside these exceptions, I would contend that as the most recent known performance of most of these plays had been by Molière's troupe, the fact of their having belonged to its repertory was the most likely reason for their revival at the Guénégaud, especially as it is possible to discern the same tactic being employed simultaneously both for Molière's plays and those by other authors.

After 1678-9, plays by other authors from the repertory of Molière's troupe did not suddenly cease to enter that of the Guénégaud. A further seven plays were added during the course of the remaining two seasons: Pierre Corneille's Le Cid, Rodogune and Cinna, and the

¹⁴ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 42, 72, 75.

¹⁵ Mémoire de Mahelot, p. 115.

¹⁶ Mercure galant (October 1677), p. 201.

anonymous farce Le Fagotier in 1679-80; Pierre Corneille's Héraclius and Polyeucte and Rotrou's Venceslas in 1680-1. With the single exception of Le Fagotier, however, these were all tragedies and had all formed part of the repertory of the Hôtel de Bourgogne.¹⁷ At Easter 1679, the Guénégaud troupe succeeded in luring Mlle Champmeslé away from the Hôtel de Bourgogne, who apparently brought a considerable number of that company's plays with her. Although it is impossible to make absolute distinctions in such matters, it would seem that this was a major factor contributing to the revival of these six plays. They will, therefore, be considered in my section on works entering the Guénégaud repertory from that of the Hôtel de Bourgogne.

Hôtel de Bourgogne

Delving into the repertory of Molière's troupe was not the only means by which the Guénégaud company sought to increase its own. Of particular interest is a group of plays which came direct from the repertory of the Hôtel de Bourgogne without ever having been performed at the Petit Bourbon or the Palais-Royal. The first of these was Quinault's Agrippa, roi d'Albe,¹⁸ performed by the Guénégaud company during their 1676-7 season. It does not necessarily follow, however, that the inclusion of this play was motivated solely by a desire on the part of the Guénégaud troupe to poach plays from their rivals. It could equally well have been prompted by a wish to capitalize on the popularity Quinault was enjoying as Lully's librettist. This could also have motivated the addition of a second play by Quinault the following season 1677-8, Les Coups de l'amour et de la fortune, again taken direct

¹⁷ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 50, 52, 64.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 107.

from the repertory of the Hôtel de Bourgogne.¹⁹ A third play by Quinault from the Hôtel de Bourgogne repertory, Astrate, roi de Tyr,²⁰ was added to that of the Guénégaud in 1678-9.

1677-8 also saw the revival of two comedies by Thomas Corneille at the Guénégaud: La Comtesse d'Orgueil, the only full-length work from the repertory of the Marais company to enter that of the Guénégaud after 1673-4, and Dom Bertrand de Cigarral which, as we have seen, had been performed both by Molière's troupe and that of the Marais. 1677-8 was the first season during which there had not been a première by Thomas Corneille at the Guénégaud since it had opened its doors. Moreover, in 1677-8 Thomas gave his tragedy Le Comte d'Essex to the Hôtel de Bourgogne,²¹ thereby participating in the 'guerre des tragédies' on the side of the Guénégaud's rivals. These two comedies could, therefore, have been revived with a triple purpose: to remedy this lack, compete with work given elsewhere, and capitalize on earlier successes. If so, the device was unsuccessful, for both La Comtesse d'Orgueil and Dom Bertrand de Cigarral were performed only twice at the Guénégaud and then dropped from the repertory.

Plays by Quinault were not the only ones to be taken direct into the Guénégaud repertory from that of the Hôtel de Bourgogne. 1677-8 also saw the inclusion of Montfleury's Le Mariage de rien and Pradon's Tamerlan.²² Pierre Corneille's Médée also entered the Guénégaud repertory this season, having been performed by both the Marais and Hôtel de Bourgogne troupes in the past.²³ The addition of Pradon's work

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 80.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 125.

²¹ Gossip, 'Chronologie', p. 1051.

²² Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 103, 156.

²³ Ibid., p. 48.

is particularly interesting in that it represents the first instance of the Guénégaud company poaching a recent play from their rivals, since the tragedy had been given its first performance only two seasons before in 1675.²⁴ This practice continued the following season, 1678-9, when the Guénégaud troupe introduced into their repertory Racine's Andromaque, first performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1667, and still part of their repertory in 1674.²⁵ It is possible to see the inclusion of these two plays as part of a general trend, for, as the size of the Guénégaud repertory increased, so did the number of tragedies, tragicomedies and comédies-héroïques it contained. Four were performed in 1673-4, two in 1674-5, five in 1675-6, and three in 1676-7. In 1677-8, however, this figure suddenly leapt to ten, rising even higher to twelve or 25% of the total repertory in 1678-9; and it is interesting that even after the size of the repertory stabilized, the proportion of more serious plays continued to rise, fourteen or 29% being performed in 1679-80, and sixteen or 33% in 1680-1.

Several different factors may have contributed to this increase in the number of more serious plays in the Guénégaud repertory. As we have seen, there occurred from 1675 to 1678 between the Guénégaud and the Hôtel de Bourgogne what Guy Boquet has described as a 'guerre des tragédies'. It is hard not to see this increase and, more particularly, the poaching of certain works recently presented by the Hôtel de Bourgogne, as an extension of this 'guerre' into the realm of the revival. There may be several reasons why the Guénégaud should have wished to enter such a war. In the first few seasons of its activity, the Guénégaud troupe had relied heavily on Montfleury and Thomas Corneille to furnish them with new plays. In 1676-7, however, these two

²⁴ Ibid., p. 168.

²⁵ Mélése, Répertoire, p. 133.

playwrights appear to have begun to drift away from the Guénégaud in the direction of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, where both had given works in the past. In this season Montfleury gave the latter troupe his Crispin gentilhomme, in 1677-8 Thomas Corneille gave them Le Comte d'Essex, and in 1679-80 Montfleury gave them La Dupe de soi-même.²⁶ This is not to say that the two authors neglected the Guénégaud altogether; it was there that Thomas Corneille gave Le Triomphe des dames in 1676-7, Montfleury La Dame médecin in 1679-80, and Thomas La Devineresse in 1679-80. Nevertheless, whereas once they could have been considered as the Guénégaud's 'house playwrights', now they distributed their works between the two troupes; and who is to say that their luring away was not in itself an incident in the 'guerre' between the two companies?

What could have motivated these two authors to make such a move? As far as Thomas Corneille is concerned, his early successes at the Guénégaud had been with the two machine plays, Circé and L'Inconnu. As we have seen, thanks to the restrictions on stage music imposed by Lully to safeguard his privilège, the production of machine plays had become extremely difficult. These restrictions were tightened still further in March 1675, when it was stipulated that the two singers allowed in 1673 had to be company members rather than professionals brought in for specific productions. Thus, the presentation of the machine play proper became to all intents and purposes impossible, and the majority of Thomas's productions after this date consist of attempts to integrate spectacle into a production in such a way that it did not depend on music for its effect. Given these restrictions imposed on a company composed half of specialists in the machine play, occupying a theatre purpose-built for spectacular productions, and with two machinistes

²⁶ H. Bidou, 'Une soirée rue Mazarine', Conferencia, 15 (1920-1), pp. 25-42 (p. 30); Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 169.

permanently on the pay-roll, Thomas and Montfleury no doubt considered that they would do well to diversify their interests and not be exclusively associated with a troupe whose future must have looked decidedly insecure. Similarly, the Guénégaud company members, themselves, must have looked for ways to extend their range beyond the comedy and the machine play for which they had hitherto been celebrated.

This change in direction on the part of the Guénégaud company may also have been influenced by a change in public taste. This is recorded by La Fontaine in his épître 'A M. de Niert sur l'Opéra':

Des machines d'abord le surprenant spectacle
Eblouit le bourgeois, et fit crier miracle;
Mais la seconde fois il ne s'y pressa plus;
Il aima mieux le Cid, Horace, Héraclius.²⁷

According to Pierre Clarac, the 'Epître' was written in January or early February 1677.²⁸ If so, the revivals referred to can only have taken place at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, since Le Cid did not enter the Guénégaud repertory until 1679-80, and Héraclius until 1680-1; Horace was never performed there. There are, however, references to a great many revivals of works by Pierre Corneille at the Hôtel de Bourgogne at this time: Oedipe in 1676-7; Oedipe, Polyeucte, Cinna, Horace, Le menteur, La Mort de Pompée and Nicomède in 1677-8; and Le Cid in 1680-1.²⁹ What is more, Rodogune, Dom Sanche d'Aragon, Sertorius, Héraclius and Othon all have their production details recorded in the Michel

²⁷ La Fontaine, Oeuvres diverses, p. 617.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 961.

²⁹ Mélése, Répertoire, p. 111. Mercure galant (October 1677), pp. 201-2; (March 1678), p. 198. Chevalley, 'Derniers jours', p. 405.

Laurent section of the Mémoire de Mahelot, and so were all presumably performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne between 1673 and 1680.³⁰

If these revivals were as popular as La Fontaine indicates, it is not surprising that the Guénégaud company should have decided that this was the path in which they must follow. Potentially successful new tragedies were difficult to come by for both companies at this time. Racine, the mainstay of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, retired from writing for the professional stage in 1677. The only remaining tragic playwrights of any renown were Boyer and Pradon, neither of whom had been particularly popular at the Guénégaud.³¹ It must have seemed, therefore, in 1678-9, that the only way to the successful production of tragedies was through a policy of revival, and of the works of Pierre Corneille and Racine in particular. It was, no doubt, with a view to the production of such works, as well as, possibly, to deal a death blow to their rivals, that the Guénégaud company lured Mlle Champmeslé away from the Hôtel de Bourgogne. In order to gain her services and those of her husband, the troupe, as we have seen, was forced to offer the couple extremely advantageous terms: a full share in the company each, plus a bonus of 1,000 livres per annum (R VII, title page v°).

Mlle Champmeslé joined the Guénégaud company at Easter 1679, bringing with her, or at least allowing the troupe to add to its repertory, amongst others some of the greatest tragic works of the century. In 1679-80, were added Pradon's Pirame et Thisbé, Thomas Corneille's Ariane and Camma, Pierre Corneille's Le Cid, Rodogune and Cinna, and Racine's Bérénice, Bajazet, Mithridate, Phèdre and

³⁰ Mémoire de Mahelot, pp. 109-12. Suréna was given its first performance in 1674.

³¹ Thomas Corneille, too, had given a tragedy to the Guénégaud company, La Mort d'Achilles, given nine performances in 1673-4 and then dropped from the repertory.

Britannicus; in 1680-1, Pierre Corneille's Héraclius and Polyeucte, and Rotrou's Venceslas. All of these plays had, of course, formed part of the repertory of the Hôtel de Bourgogne,³² but several had also been performed by the other two troupes. All those by Pierre Corneille, with the single exception of Héraclius, had been given their first performance at the Marais theatre, and the following plays had also formed part of the repertory of Molière's troupe: Le Cid, Rodogune, Cinna, Héraclius and Venceslas. Nevertheless, it would seem likely that their addition to the Guénégaud repertory at this time owed more to the fact that they were for the most part great tragedies that had belonged to the repertory of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, than to their having been performed by either of the other two companies, especially as they had all, with the exception of Le Cid, been performed or revived by the Hôtel de Bourgogne company in the recent past (Ariane in 1672; Pirame et Thisbé in 1673-4; Cinna, Bajazet, Mithridate, Phèdre, Polyeucte and Venceslas in 1677-8; and Camma, Rodogune, Bérénice, Britannicus and Héraclius between 1673 and 1678.³³

The Hôtel de Bourgogne company could not, however, afford to let plays drop from their repertory simply because they had been appropriated by their rivals. Thus, though without their leading tragic actress, they continued to perform many of the great works for which they had been celebrated for so long. As a result, in 1680-1, just prior to the founding of the Comédie-Française, we find Andromaque, Ariane, Mithridate, Le Cid and Cinna in the repertories of both troupes.³⁴

³² Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 45, 52, 64, 103, 139, 142, 145, 149, 153, 160.

³³ Ibid., pp. 145, 153; Mercure galant (October 1677), pp. 201-2; Mémoire de Mahelot, pp. 109-13.

³⁴ Chevalley, 'Derniers Jours', p. 405.

The Hôtel de Bourgogne, however, was not itself entirely innocent in this matter; and, although we have considerably less material concerning its repertory, there is evidence to suggest that they were not above employing similar tactics, though whether in direct response to those of the Guénégaud troupe it is impossible to say. Molière, in particular, appears to have been popular with the Hôtel de Bourgogne company. In 1677-8, their repertory contained Champmeslé's Les Fragments de Molière, a re-setting of several scenes from Dom Juan, Brécourt's L'Ombre de Molière, in which the author's ghost and several of his more popular characters appear, together with L'Avare, L'Ecole des femmes and Le Misanthrope.³⁵ By 1680-1, Les Fâcheux and Le Cocu imaginaire had also been added, as had Tartuffe and La Princesse d'Elide, a play which, curiously, was never performed at the Guénégaud.³⁶

The revival of one other play at the Hôtel de Bourgogne may also have been affected by its treatment at the Guénégaud. Tristan l'Hermite's La Mariane was revived by both companies in 1677-8.³⁷ Given this simultaneity, it is impossible to determine conclusively which company imitated the other, but as the play had previously been performed by both the Marais company and Molière's troupe, and as there exists no record of its having been performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne prior to this date, it would seem likely that the latter company followed the Guénégaud rather than vice versa.

DISPLACEMENT

The addition of plays into the Guénégaud repertory in the last three seasons of its activity provides an admirable illustration of the

³⁵ Mercure galant (October 1677), p. 202.

³⁶ Chevalley, 'Derniers jours', p. 405; Mémoire de Mahelot, pp. 117-9.

³⁷ Le Mercure galant (October 1677), p. 201.

phenomenon of 'displacement'. When the Guénégaud's repertory stabilized at approximately forty-eight plays per season in 1678-9, in order for a new work to be introduced an old one had to be dropped. Often this was one that had, itself, been first performed or revived only recently. Thus, in 1678-9, Pierre Corneille's Pulchérie and Médée were dropped, together with Pradon's Electre; and in 1679-80, when eleven tragedies were added from the repertory of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, the following plays were dropped to make way for them: Pierre Corneille's Tite et Bérénice, Pradon's Phèdre et Hippolyte and Tamerlan, Montfleury's L'Ambigu comique and La Dame médecin, Boyer's Le Comte d'Essex and La Princesse de Clèves, Boisrobert's La Folle Gageure, Guérin de Bouscal's Le Gouvernement de Sanche Pansa, Vaumorière's Le Cavalier par amour and Le Fin/Feint Lourdaud. The cases of Tite et Bérénice and Phèdre et Hippolyte are particularly interesting in that this season almost certainly saw them being dropped in order to be replaced by the works with which they had originally been in competition. The following season, 1680-1, only one tragedy was dropped, Thomas Corneille's Camma, together with the anonymous farce Le Fagotier. These plays disappeared from the Parisian stage for the remainder of the century; a number of others, however, were dropped temporarily, only to re-emerge at the Comédie-Française some seasons later. These were, in 1678-9, Thomas Corneille's Dom Bertrand de Cigarral and La Comtesse d'Orgueil; in 1679-80, Du Ryer's Scevole, Quinault's Agrippa, roi d'Albe, Adraste, roi de Tyr and Les Coups de l'amour et de la fortune, and Montauban's Les Charmes de Félicie; and in 1680-1, Subligny's Le Désespoir extravagant,

and Thomas Corneille's L'Inconnu, La Devineresse and Le Comédien poète, written in collaboration with Montfleury.³⁸

PROGRAMMING

There remains one final indication as to the production policy of the Guénégaud company in the matter of revivals. As we have seen, in the seventeenth century, before a play could enter a theatre's repertory, a copy had to be bought and the actors' rôles copied out so that rehearsals could begin. In the Guénégaud account books there are many references to payments for the purchase of scripts, and to Lapierre the company's copyist. It was not unusual for these transactions to be carried out up to six months before the work was finally added to the repertory, which gives us some idea of how far ahead the troupe habitually planned. In some instances, however, the gap is considerably longer; for example Rosimond's L'Avocat sans étude, a play coming to the Guénégaud from the Marais repertory, was copied in August 1673 but was not actually performed until 1675-6 (R I, 19). More interesting is the case of Pierre Corneille's Polyeucte, copied in February 1678 (R V, 122), but not added to the repertory until 1680. This play, first performed at the Marais, had not been performed by Molière's troupe, but had been revived by the Hôtel de Bourgogne company during their 1677-8 season.³⁹ The plan to revive it at the Guénégaud must, therefore, have been conceived in direct response to this, and we can only wonder why it was not followed through. If it had been, Polyeucte would have been the first of the great tragedies by Pierre Corneille or Racine to enter the Guénégaud repertory.

³⁸ See Henry Carrington Lancaster, The Comédie-Française 1680-1701: Plays, Actors, Spectators, Finances (Baltimore, 1941); A. Joannidès, La Comédie-Française de 1680 à 1900: tableau des représentations (Paris, 1921).

³⁹ Mercure galant (March 1678), p. 198.

These same transactions recorded in the account books also reveal another group of plays which were bought or copied on the instructions of the Guénégaud company, but which for some reason were never performed. These include in 1677-8, Quinault's La Comédie sans comédie, and, separately, the farce included in it, Le Docteur de verre; in 1678-9, Quinault's Le Feint Alcibiade, Thomas Corneille's Antiochus, De Prade's Arsace, roi des Parthes, Montfleury's La Fille capitaine and La Femme juge et partie, and an anonymous Scipion which may well have been that of Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin (R V, 116, 119; VI, 8, 44, 83-4). In 1679-80, a copy was made of Le Médecin malgré lui, dropped by the Guénégaud in 1673-4, but which was to reappear triumphantly at the Comédie-Française in 1680 (R VII, 35).⁴⁰ This list is interesting in that it contains examples of all the various trends in production policy we have discussed so far: a play by Molière, a play by another author from the repertory of Molière's troupe (Arsace, roi des Parthes), plays by Quinault and Thomas Corneille, and plays from the repertory of the Marais theatre (La Comédie sans comédie, Le Docteur de verre), but with the greatest emphasis being on the adoption of plays from the repertory of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, and recent works and revivals in particular (Le Feint Alcibiade, Antiochus, La Fille capitaine, La Femme juge et partie).⁴¹

COMEDIE-FRANCAISE

Finally, let us consider how plays from the Guénégaud repertory fared when the company was united with that of the Hôtel de Bourgogne to form the Comédie-Française. Of the eighty-seven plays performed at the

⁴⁰ See Henri Lagrave, 'Molière à la Comédie-Française (1680-1789)', Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, 72 (1972), p. 1057.

⁴¹ Deierkauf-Holsboer, L'Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 85, 130, 137, 144; Le Mémoire de Mahelot, pp. 114, 119-20.

the Guénégaud, nineteen or 22% were never given at the Comédie-Française before 1900: L'Ambigu comique (although the two petites pièces, Le Semblable à soi-même and Dom Pasquin d'Avalos were given), Pulchérie, La Mort d'Achilles, Trigaudin, the Iphigénie of Le Clerc and Coras, Le Volontaire, Le Triomphe des dames, Phèdre et Hippolyte, Electre, La Dame médecin, Boyer's Le Comte d'Essex, La Folle Gageure, Le Fin/Feint Lourdaud, Le Gouvernement de Sanche Pansa, Tite et Bérénice, Le Cavalier par amour, La Princesse de Clèves, Le Fagotier and La Bassette. Of the remaining plays, fifty-nine or 68% of the total repertory were performed at the Comédie-Française within the first five years of its existence, and a further nine were added in later years: La Comtesse d'Orgueil in 1687, Coriolan, Dom Pasquin d'Avalos and Le Désespoir extravagant in 1688, Camma in 1700, Circé in 1705, Tamerlan in 1706, Dom César d'Avalos in 1707 and Médée in 1763.

As far as the respective contributions of the Guénégaud and the Hôtel de Bourgogne to the repertory of the Comédie-Française are concerned, in the first season of the latter company's existence seventy-seven different plays were performed. Seven or 9% were premières, twenty-six or 34% were common to the repertories of both the component troupes, and a further twenty-four or 31% came from the repertory of the Guénégaud alone. The remaining twenty plays or 25% of the total repertory came from that of the Hôtel de Bourgogne alone.⁴² It should be pointed out, however, that several of these had previously

⁴² See Lancaster, Comédie-Française; Joannidès, Comédie-Française.

been performed by Molière's troupe and that of the Marais, even if they had never been given by these two troupes united at the Guénégaud.⁴³

During the period 1673-1680, therefore, from the death of Molière to the foundation of the Comédie-Française, besides serving to keep Molière's works before the theatre public, the Guénégaud company also performed the important function of preserving from oblivion a number of works by other playwrights previously performed by Molière's troupe, thus enabling the majority to pass on into the repertory of the Comédie-Française. Their motives were clearly not altruistic, however; and in their struggle for survival we have seen them capitalizing on their assets to their best advantage, giving the public what they wanted both in terms of the popularity of certain fashionable playwrights and the genre of work presented, while adapting a highly competitive attitude vis-à-vis their rivals at the Hôtel de Bourgogne.

⁴³ Those performed at the Marais were: Thomas Corneille's Le Geôlier de soi-même, Scarron's Dom Japhet d'Arménie and Jodelet maître et valet and Pierre Corneille's Sertorius, Le menteur and Horace. Molière's troupe had performed all the above plays with the addition of Scarron's L'Héritier ridicule and Pierre Corneille's Nicomède.

CHAPTER SIX - AUDIENCES

It is impossible to determine exactly the composition of the audience which would have attended the Guénégaud theatre. The company's Registres provide us with information as to how many tickets were sold at given prices for each performance, but, except for a very few cases, we cannot know to whom they were sold and must be wary of assuming that the cheaper tickets were purchased by members of the lower social orders or that positions in the more expensive areas were the exclusive monopoly of the nobility. As John Lough points out in Paris Theatre Audiences of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, members of the nobility did not disdain to watch a play from the parterre on occasion, and when certain middle-class merchants attended the theatre, they themselves stood in the parterre but took boxes for their wives (pp. 89, 99). It is, therefore, only with the greatest caution that we should attempt to interpret those statistics that can be derived from the account books of the Guénégaud company. Even so, an exhaustive analysis of these figures could itself form the subject of an entire thesis. Only certain areas of particular interest will, therefore, be examined.

NAMED INDIVIDUALS

As we have seen, not all members of the Guénégaud audience paid for their tickets on the day on which they attended a performance, and it was one of the duties of the portier, Subtil, to collect outstanding sums. Not surprisingly, such credit was, for the most part, only extended to the Guénégaud's noble patrons. The debts and the date on which they were settled were entered in the company's Registres, thus giving some indication as to who these patrons were, which plays they chose to attend, and where in the theatre they preferred to be

positioned. The entries also provide some interesting footnotes to the pages of history. For example, the Marquis d'Alluyes attended a performance of La Devineresse just two months before his wife was forced to flee to Brussels with the Comtesse de Soissons to escape the consequences of her involvement in 'L'Affaire des Poisons' on which the play is based.¹

DEBTS OUTSTANDING FOR ATTENDANCES AT THE GUENEGAUD THEATRE

DATE	NAME	PROGRAMME	DEBT	PAID
1673-4				
8 Aug	M. Dhervai	<u>Femmes savantes</u>	5 [#] 10 ^s	20 Aug
-	M. de Mickelbourg ²	-	11 [#]	19 Nov
12 Jan	M. de Mickelbourg	<u>Mort d'Achilles</u> + <u>George Dandin</u>	2 places	-
28 Jan	M. de Luxembourg ³	<u>Trigaudin</u>	27 [#] 10 ^s	30 Jan
18 Feb	'l'envoi de Germ...'	<u>Femmes savantes</u>	11 [#]	25 Feb
1674-5				
28 Sep	M. de la Veillière ⁴	<u>Amphitryon</u>	11 [#]	-
30 Nov	M. Du Mont ⁵	<u>Ecole des maris</u> <u>George Dandin</u>	110 [#]	-
2 Dec	M. Du Mont	<u>Bourgeois gentilhomme</u>	-	-
26 Mar	Mgr le Duc ⁶	<u>Circé</u>	44 [#]	-
2 Apr	M. de l'Isle ⁷	<u>Circé</u>	4 [#] (2 pl)	-
1675-6				
30 Apr	M. de Bourbonne	<u>Circé</u>	15 [#]	-
28 May	M. de la Forest	<u>Iphigénie</u>	1 [#] 10 ^s	31 May
7 Jun	Mme de la Tourne-	<u>Iphigénie</u>	5 [#] 10 ^s	-

¹ Petitfils, Affaire des poisons, p. 231.

² Possibly Christian-Louis, Duc de Mecklembourg.

³ François-Henri de Montmorency-Bouteville (1628-95), by marriage Duc de Piney-Luxembourg, follower of Princes' Party during Fronde, returned to France after treaty of Pyrenees, Maréchal de France in 1675, Governor of Normandy in 1691.

⁴ Possibly Jean-François Le Blanc de la Baume, Marquis de la Vallière (1641-76), Governor of the Bourbonnais in 1670.

⁵ Possibly Hyacinthe de Gauréaul, Seigneur du Mont (1627-1706), Ecuyer du Roi in 1687, then of Monseigneur, Captain and Governor of the châteaux of Meudon, Clamart, Chaville and Viroflay in 1706.

⁶ Louis III de Bourbon-Condé, known as Monsieur le Duc (1668-1710), Grand Master of France, Governor of Burgundy.

⁷ Thomas Corneille (1625-1709).

	charente			
11 Aug	M. de Rothelin ⁸	<u>Circé</u>	44*	- n
17 Nov	M. de Mickelbourg	<u>Inconnu</u>	5* 10 ^s	19 Nov
24 Nov	M. de Niert ⁹	<u>Inconnu</u>	5* 10 ^s	29 Nov
15 Dec	'un officier anglais'	<u>Inconnu</u>	5* 10 ^s	-
17 Jan	M. Flautin	<u>Inconnu</u>	6* 10 ^s	19 Jan
1676-7				
5 Jul	M. de Bouillon ¹⁰	<u>M. de Pourceaugnac</u>	-	-
4 Sep	Mme la Marquise	<u>Triomphe des dames</u>	1* 10 ^s	-
3 Jan	Mme de Châteauneuf ¹¹	<u>Phèdre et Hippolyte</u>	11*	5 Jan
"	Mme d'Olonne ¹²	"	9*	10 Jan
5 Jan	M. de La Reynie	<u>Phèdre et Hippolyte</u>	33*	8 Jan
10 Jan	Comte de Tonnerre ¹³	<u>Phèdre et Hippolyte</u>	5* 10 ^s	15 Jan
22 Jan	M. de Niert	<u>Phèdre et Hippolyte</u>	27* 10 ^s	-
24 Jan	Leurs Altesses	<u>Phèdre et Hippolyte</u>	220*	29 Jan
	Royales ¹⁴			
"	Marquis de Biron ¹⁵	"	5* 10 ^s	24 Jan
"	M. de la Ville	"	27* 10 ^s	24 Jan
16 Feb	Prince de	<u>Festin de pierre</u>	5* 10 ^s	23 Feb
	Fürstenberg ¹⁶			
"	M. de Ventadour ¹⁷	"	5* 10 ^s	21 Feb
"	M. de Biron	"	1 place	-

⁸ Henri II d'Orléans-Longueville, Marquis de Rothelin (1655-91), Premier Capitaine-Enseigne des Gendarmes de la Garde.

⁹ Pierre de Niert (1597-1682), singer and lutanist, Premier Valet de Chambre to Louis XIV.

¹⁰ Godefroy-Maurice de la Tour d'Auvergne, Duc de Bouillon (1639-1721), Grand Chamberlain of France.

¹¹ Marie-Marguerite de Fourcy, Marquise de Châteauneuf (1646-1711), wife of Balthazar Phélypeaux, Marquis de Châteauneuf.

¹² Catherine-Henriette d'Angennes, Comtesse d'Olonne (1634-1714), wife of Louis de la Trémoille-Royan, Comte d'Olonne.

¹³ François de Clermont, Comte de Tonnerre (1600-79), Lieutenant Général des Armées.

¹⁴ Philippe, Duc d'Orléans, known as Monsieur (1640-1701), second son of Louis XIII and Anne of Austria, brother of Louis XIV, and his second wife, Elisabeth-Charlotte of the Palatinate, known as Madame (1652-1722).

¹⁵ François de Gontaut, Marquis de Biron (1620-1700), Maréchal de Camp in 1649, Sénéchal de Périgord in 1651, Lieutenant Général in 1655, retired 1658.

¹⁶ Antoine-Egon, Prince de Fürstenberg (1656-1716), resident for a time in France before returning to Germany, Prime Minister of the Elector of Saxe.

¹⁷ Louis-Charles de Levis, Duc de Ventadour (d. 1717).

-	M. de Gourville ¹⁸	-	5* 10 ^s	2 Mar
1677-8				
25 Jul	Prince de Monaco ¹⁹	<u>Visionnaires</u>	6*	-
-	M. de Niert	-	4* 10 ^s	30 Jul
8 Aug	Prince de Monaco	<u>Coups de l'amour et de la fortune</u>	6*	-
17 Aug	M. de Niert	<u>Tartuffe</u>	3*	17 Sep
22 Aug	Prince de Monaco	<u>Mariane</u> + <u>Semblable à soi-même</u>	6*	-
29 Aug	Prince de Monaco	<u>Mariane</u>	7* 10 ^s (5 pl)	-
7 Sep	M. de Gourville	<u>Charmes de Félicie</u>	3*	-
12 Sep	Prince de Monaco	<u>Charmes de Félicie</u>	6*	-
14 Sep	Prince de Monaco	<u>Avare</u>	6*	-
-	M. de Niert	-	2* 10 ^s	17 Sep
28 Sep	M. de Niert	<u>Fourberies de Scapin</u> + <u>Désespoir extravagant</u>	3*	3 Oct
8 Oct	Mme Picart	<u>Amphitryon</u>	12* (4 pl)	10 Oct
29 Oct	M. de Niert	<u>Malade imaginaire</u>	6*	-
19 Nov	Mme de Bouillon ²⁰	<u>Femmes savantes</u> + <u>Désespoir extravagant</u>	22*	21 Nov
3 Dec	Mme de Nemours ²¹	<u>Tamerlan</u> + <u>Avocat sans étude</u>	44*	12 Dec
14 Dec	M. de Niert	<u>Bourgeois gentilhomme</u>	3*	7 Jan
(21 Dec)	Prince Philippe	<u>(Electre)</u>	5* 10 ^s	21 Dec
26 Dec	M. de Lillebonne ²²	<u>Electre</u> + <u>Semblable à soi-même</u>	5* 10 ^s	7 Jan
"	Mme Son Altesse Royale	"	132*	18 Jan
"	Comtesse des Marais	"	11* 8 ^s	-
28 Dec	M. de Biron	<u>Electre</u>	5* 10 ^s	21 Jan
-	M. Bonnet ²³	-	61* 2 ^s	31 Dec
-	M. de Niert	-	3*	18 Jan

¹⁸ Either Jean Hérauld de Gourville (1625-1703), Maître d'Hôtel of Prince de Marsillac and his secretary at Government of Poitou in 1646, played active rôle during Fronde, Receveur Général of Guyenne in 1657, Conseiller d'Etat in 1660, Secrétaire du Roi in 1661, implicated in the disgrace of Fouquet, plenipotentiary in Brunswick and in Germany, homme d'affaires of Prince de Condé and of King; or François Hérauld de Gourville (1665-1718), nephew of above, Conseiller au Parlement de Metz.

¹⁹ Louis Grimaldi, Duc de Valentinois, Prince de Monaco (1642-1701), created Duke and Peer in 1668, Ambassador to Rome in 1698.

²⁰ Marie-Anne Mancini, Duchesse de Bouillon (1650-1714), niece of Mazarin, wife of Godefroy-Maurice de la Tour d'Auvergne, Duc de Bouillon.

²¹ Marie d'Orléans-Longueville, Duchesse de Nemours (1625-1707), wife of Henri de Savoie, Duc de Nemours (1625-59).

²² François-Marie de Lorraine, Prince de Lillebonne (1627-94), Lieutenant Général in 1651.

²³ Possibly Jean Bonnet, superior of Saint-Lazare.

18 Jan	M. de Niert	<u>Dame médecin</u>	5* 10 ^s	23 Jan
28 Jan	M. de la Rocheguyon ²⁴	<u>Dame médecin</u>	16* 10 ^s	-
22 Feb	M. de Niert	<u>M. de Pourceaugnac</u> <u>+ George Dandin</u>	3*	25 Feb
-	Chevalier d'Harcourt ²⁵	-	22*	4 Mar
18 Mar	M. de Niert	<u>Malade imaginaire</u>	9*	22 Mar
				27 Mar
27 Mar	M. de Niert	<u>Tartuffe</u>	5*	28 Mar
28 Mar	M. de Biron	<u>Fâcheux</u> <u>+ Fourberies de Scapin</u>	3*	-
"	M. de Calpatry	"	1*	30 Mar
2 Apr	M. de Biron	<u>Bourgeois gentilhomme</u>	3*	-
1678-9				
13 May	M. de Gourville	<u>Pulchérie</u> <u>+ Fin Lourdaut</u>	3*	10 Jun
10 Jun	Princes de Conti ²⁶	<u>Héritier ridicule</u>	44*	3 Jul
24 Jun	M. de Niert	<u>Dame médecin</u>	3*	17 Jul
5 Jul	M. de Niert	<u>Ecole des maris</u> <u>+ George Dandin</u>	1*	-
17 Jul	Prince de Conti	<u>Femmes savantes</u> <u>+ Mariage de rien</u>	6*	22 Jul (11*)
9 Aug	Duc de Saint-Aignan ²⁷	<u>Misanthrope</u> <u>+ Comtesse d'Escarbagnas</u>	22*	-
14 Aug	Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon	<u>Bourgeois gentilhomme</u>	16* 10 ^s	19 Aug
16 Aug	Duc de Saint-Aignan	<u>Bourgeois gentilhomme</u>	22*	-
"	Prince de Conti	"	11*	19 Aug
21 Aug	Princes de Conti	<u>Etourdi</u>	27* 10 ^s	(25 Nov)
24 Aug	M. Berthelot fils	<u>Ambigu comique</u>	3*	25 Aug
27 Aug	Ambassadeur d'Angleterre	<u>Facheux</u> <u>+ M. de Pourceaugnac</u>	22*	-
3 Sep	M. Berthelot	<u>Fourberies de Scapin</u> <u>+ Désespoir extravagant</u>	3*	18 Sep
11 Sep	M. Berthelot	<u>Etourdi</u>	3*	18 Sep
18 Sep	M. de Niert	<u>Comédien poète</u>	3*	21 Sep

²⁴ François Duc de la Rocheguyon (1663-1728), in 1714 Duc de la Rochefoucauld, colonel in the regiment of Navarre in 1683, Maréchal de Camp in 1696.

²⁵ Possibly Alphonse-Henri-Charles de Lorraine (1648-1719), later Comte or Prince d'Harcourt, aide de camp to Dauphin in 1684, Lieutenant Général at time of Venetian expedition to Morea, Bailli and Governor of Clermont in 1707.

²⁶ Louis-Armand 1^{er} de Bourbon, Prince de Conti (1661-85), and François-Louis de Bourbon, Comte de la Marche (1664-1709), in 1685 on the death of his brother Prince de Conti, also known as Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon.

²⁷ François de Beauvillier, first Duc de Saint-Aignan (1610-87), Capitaine des Gardes de Corps of Gaston d'Orléans in 1644, Premier Gentilhomme de la Chambre du Roi in 1649, Lieutenant Général in 1650, Governor of Tourraine in 1661, Duc-Pair and member of the Académie-Française in 1663.

(28 Sep)	M. de Lionne ²⁸	(Facheux + M. de Pourceaugnac)	23 [#] 10 ^s	28 Sep
29 Sep	M. Berthelot	Misanthrope + Cocu imaginaire	6 [#]	1 Oct
"	M. de Niert	"	3 [#]	30 Sep
"	Duc de Créquy ²⁹	"	22 [#]	-
30 Sep	Mme de Bouillon	Astrate + Amour médecin	22 [#]	-
1 Oct	Duc de Rohan ³⁰	Visionnaires	44 [#]	-
4 Oct	Duc de Créquy	Femmes savantes	22 [#]	-
5 Oct	Mme de Bouillon	Etourdi + Fourberies de Scapin	22 [#]	7 Oct
9 Oct	Mme de la Jonchère ³¹	Andromaque + Dupe amoureuse	3 [#]	11 Oct
13 Nov	M. de Niert	Bourgeois gentilhomme	3 [#]	15 Nov
15 Nov	M. de Niert	Malade imaginaire	3 [#]	18 Nov
18 Nov	Princes de Conti	Malade imaginaire	3 places	25 Nov
20 Nov	M. Berthelot	Malade imaginaire	5 [#] 10 ^s	25 Nov
"	Princes de Conti	"	4 places	25 Nov
16 Dec	M. le Duc	Femmes savantes + Dupe amoureuse	44 [#]	30 Dec (132 [#])
3 Jan	M. Berthelot	Etourdi	6 [#]	20 Jan
6 Jan	M. Sanguin	Amphitryon	13 [#] 10 ^s	24 Jan
"	Duchesse de Lesdiguières ³²	"	3 [#]	8 Jan
20 Jan	M. Sonain	Bourgeois gentilhomme	3 [#]	22 Jan
27 Jan	Prince d'Elbeuf ³³	Inconnu	5 [#] 10 ^s	7 Feb
"	M. Berthelot	"	5 [#] 10 ^s	-
5 Feb	M. de Niert	Inconnu	3 [#]	7 Feb
"	M. de Béthune ³⁴	"	5 [#] 10 ^s	10 Feb
7 Feb	M. de Béthune	Inconnu	5 [#] 10 ^s	10 Feb
10 Feb	M. de Béthune	Tartuffe + Dupe amoureuse	6 [#] (2 pl)	14 Feb

²⁸ Louis-Hugues, Marquis de Lionne, Maître de la Garde-Robe 1671-86, went mad, died 1708.

²⁹ Charles III, Marquis then in 1653, Duc et Pair de Créquy (1624-87), Premier Gentilhomme de la Chambre, Governor of Paris, Lieutenant Général in 1653.

³⁰ Louis Chabot, Duc de Rohan (1652-1719).

³¹ Madeleine Colbert de Turgis, Dame de la Jonchère (1656-1714), wife of 1. Louis Jossier de la Jonchère, 2. Louis de Bautru, Marquis de Nogent.

³² Paule-Marguerite-Françoise de Gondy, Duchesse de Lesdiguières (1651-1716), wife of François-Emmanuel de Bonne de Créquy, in 1677 Duc de Lesdiguières.

³³ Charles de Lorraine, Prince d'Elbeuf (1650-90), Knight of Malta.

³⁴ Armand 1^{er} de Béthune, Duc de Charost (1641-1715), Gouverneur Particulier of Calais, Lieutenant Général to the Government of Picardy, Boulonnais and Hainult.

12 Feb	Comtesse de Soissons ³⁵	<u>Visionnaires</u>	44*	14 Feb
		+ <u>Fourberies de Scapin</u>		
21 Feb	Duc de Ventadour	<u>Visionnaires</u>	3*	28 Feb
		+ <u>Amour médecin</u>		
24 Feb	M. de Béthune	<u>Malade imaginaire</u>	3*	7 Mar
26 Feb	Duc de Ventadour	<u>Malade imaginaire</u>	3*	28 Feb
28 Feb	M. Berthelot	<u>Bourgeois gentilhomme</u>	6* (2 pl)	5 Mar
17 Mar	Duchesse de Bouillon	<u>Amphitryon</u>	33*	-
-	M. de Baugy	-	5* 10*	14 Apr
1679-80				
14 Apr	Mme du Tillet	<u>Andromaque</u>	3*	16 Apr
		+ <u>Dupe amoureuse</u>		
"	Abbé Servien ³⁶	"	3*	23 Apr
"	M. de Villiers	"	3*	23 Apr
"	M. de Béthune	"	3*	16 Apr
16 Apr	M. Berthelot	<u>Andromaque</u>	3*	-
		+ <u>Mariage de rien</u>		
30 Apr	M. de Béthune	<u>Ariane</u>	3*	2 May
		+ <u>Mariage forcé</u>		
"	M. de Villiers	"	3*	7 May
9 May	M. de Béthune	<u>Bérénice</u>	3*	16 May
		+ <u>Gentilhomme meunier</u>		
16 May	Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon	<u>Femmes savantes</u>	5* 10*	30 May
		+ <u>Gentilhomme meunier</u>		
20 Jun	Princes de Conti	<u>Phèdre</u>	11*	7 Jul
		+ <u>Sicilien</u>		
23 Jul	Duc de Saint-Aignan	<u>Sicilien</u>	11*	-
		+ <u>M. de Pourceaugnac</u>		
8 Aug	M. de Niert	<u>Visionnaires</u>	3*	11 Aug
22 Aug	M. du Rocher	<u>Etourdi</u>	44*	-
25 Aug	M. de Niert	<u>Malade imaginaire</u>	3*	27 Aug
2 Sep	M. Berthelot	<u>Héritier ridicule</u>	9*	9 Sep
13 Sep	M. Dalier ³⁷	<u>Avare</u>	3*	14 Sep
16 Sep	M. Berthelot	<u>Andromaque</u>	9*	26 Sep
		+ <u>Avocat sans étude</u>		
17 Sep	M. Berthelot	<u>Amphitryon</u>	3*	26 Sep
18 Sep	M. Berthelot	<u>Tartuffe</u>	9*	26 Sep
"	M. de Niert	"	3*	21 Sep
25 Sep	M. Berthelot	<u>Misanthrope</u>	3*	26 Sep
27 Sep	M. Berthelot	<u>Femmes savantes</u>	3*	17 Oct
28 Sep	M. Berthelot	<u>Cinna</u>	3*	17 Oct
		+ <u>Comtesse d'Escarbagnas</u>		
29 Sep	Duc de Saint-Aignan	<u>Festin de pierre</u>	11*	-
-	M. de Niert	-	3*	2 Oct
5 Oct	M. Berthelot	<u>Ariane</u>	6*	17 Oct

³⁵ Olympe Mancini, Comtesse de Soissons (1640-1708), niece of Mazarin, wife of Eugène-Maurice de Savoie-Carignan, Comte de Soissons, Surintendante de la Maison of Queen Maria-Theresa, implicated in the 'Affaire des poisons' taking refuge in Madrid.

³⁶ Either Augustin Servien (died 1716) of his cousin Hugues (died 1723).

³⁷ Possibly André Dacier (1651-1722), Protestant, converted together with wife in 1685, scholar, member of Académie-Française, became its Secrétaire Perpetuel in 1713.

		+ <u>Mariage de rien</u>		
9 Oct	M. Berthelot	<u>Cid</u>	9*	17 Oct
		+ <u>Fagotier</u>		
17 Oct	M. d'Elbeuf	<u>Inconnu</u>	5* 10 ^s	22 Oct
22 Oct	M. d'Elbeuf	<u>Inconnu</u>	12*	3 Dec
3 Nov	M. d'Elbeuf	<u>Cinna</u>	12*	5 Apr
		+ <u>Fagotier</u>		(9*)
"	M. de Nangis ³⁸	"	9*	5 Nov
"	M. de Montgon ³⁹	"	3*	5 Nov
"	M. de Tonnerre	"	3*	-
24 Nov	M. Berthelot	<u>Devineresse</u>	11*	31 Dec
26 Nov	Marquis d'Alluyes ⁴⁰	<u>Devinercsse</u>	5* 10 ^s	-
1 Dec	M. de Biron	<u>Devineresse</u>	11*	9 Jan
-	M. de Nangis	<u>Devineresse</u>	11*	17 Dec
17 Dec	M. de Niert	<u>Devineresse</u>	5* 10 ^s	19 Dec
22 Dec	Duc de Créqui	<u>Devineresse</u>	44*	24 Dec
24 Dec	M. d'Elbeuf	<u>Devineresse</u>	16* 10 ^s	3 May
				(11*)
"	M. Berthelot	"	5* 10 ^s	5 Jan
"	Chevalier de Colbert	"	5* 10 ^s	-
31 Dec	M. de Persigny	<u>Devineresse</u>	5* 10 ^s	2 Jan
9 Jan	Mme de Bouillon	<u>Devineresse</u>	44*	14 Jan
21 Jan	M. de Persigny	<u>Devineresse</u>	3*	11 Feb
6 Feb	M. de la Bazinière	<u>Devineresse</u>	3*	11 Feb
"	M. Berthelot	"	3*	-
23 Feb	Mgr le Duc	<u>Devineresse</u>	165*	25 Feb
			(3 loges)	
5 Mar	M. Dordu	<u>Devineresse</u>	3*	-
12 Mar	M. de Ventadour	<u>Agamemnon</u>	5* 10 ^s	15 Mar
17 Mar	M. de la Roche-	<u>Agamemnon</u>	5* 10 ^s	19 Mar
	sur-Yon			
"	M. de la Tonnerre	"	11*	19 Mar
"	M. de l'Archet	"	5* 10 ^s	19 Mar
				(11*)
"	M. de Villiers	"	5* 10 ^s	31 Mar
"	M. de Ventadour	"	5* 10 ^s	19 Mar

The above references to named individuals enable us to note the frequency with which aficionados would go to the theatre. For example, M. Berthelot attended the Guénégaud seven times in September 1679 alone, and ended that season with no less than three visits to see La Devineresse. As might be expected, the majority of such entries refer to

³⁸ Louis-Fauste de Brichanteau, Marquis de Nangis (1658-90), Brigadier de Cavalerie in 1689.

³⁹ Jean-François Cordebeuf de Beauverger, Marquis de Montgon (1655-1730), Maréchal de Camp in 1696, Lieutenant Général in 1702.

⁴⁰ Paul d'Escoubleau, Marquis d'Alluyes (died 1690), Governor of the Orléanais and Amboise.

the sale of tickets for the most expensive areas of the house - on the stage or in the first row of boxes. There were, however, occasions when members of the nobility sat elsewhere. The amphithéâtre is referred to in such a way only once, when on 5 February 1679, M. de Niert sat there at a performance of L'Inconnu (R VI, 143). The days were clearly long gone when the amphithéâtre was so popular with the aristocracy that Monsieur and Madame and their suite occupied that area at the Palais-Royal on two ^aseparate occasions.⁴¹ The second row of boxes seated members of the nobility on at least two occasions: Mme d'Olonne at Phèdre et Hippolyte on 3 January 1677, and M. de Monaco and company at La Mariane on 29 August 1677 (R IV, 107; V, 49). Still more surprising is the fact that such people also occupied the third row of boxes on four occasions: Thomas Corneille at his own Circé on 2 April 1675; M. de Niert at Tartuffe on 27 March 1678, and L'Ecole des maris and George Dandin on 5 July 1678; and M. de Calpatry at Les Fâcheux and Les Fourberies de Scapin on 28 March 1678 (R II, 146; V, 138-9; VI, 33). As, with the exception of Circé, none of these works was such a novelty as to have sold out the rest of the house, it must be that these people opted to sit in this area which had hitherto primarily been the domain of the livrée. On only one occasion is a gentleman recorded as owing for a place in the parterre: M. de la Forest at Iphigénie on 28 May 1675 (R III, 16). Curiously, given that the parterre was an exclusively male enclave, Mme la Marquise is given as owing 1 livre 10 sols, the price of a parterre ticket au double, after a performance of Le Triomphe des dames on 4 September 1676 (R IV, 57).

⁴¹ Chevalley, 'Etude critique', p. 181.

PARTERRE

John Lough claims that the audience of Corneille, Molière and Racine was socially mixed. He bases this assertion on the fact that lackeys, shop-assistants and lawyers' clerks are specifically referred to in the documents of the time, and points out that the very fact that tickets were available at a range of prices indicates that people of different ranks had access to the theatre.⁴² Nevertheless, this mix may not have been as complete as Lough would seem to suggest. At a time when the average wage of a skilled worker was between 15 and 20 sols a day,⁴³ it is doubtful if many would have chosen to give the 15 sols required for a ticket to the parterre. This argument is forcibly if somewhat unrealistically rejected by H.C. Lancaster: 'Nor is the question of expense a serious argument. Even when "quinze sous" represented a day's pay, the man who earned no more than this amount may well have spent it once or twice a year at the theatre'.⁴⁴ More difficult to overcome is the objection that it would have been difficult for him to find the time other than on Sundays, especially as the theatres, too, closed out of respect for religious holidays. Lough, himself, concludes that the parterre audience of the various Parisian theatres of the second half of the seventeenth century was composed, 'not of plebian groundlings, but for the most part of solid bourgeois, with at least a sprinkling of noblemen'.⁴⁵

⁴² Lough, Paris Theatre Audiences, pp. 56, 79.

⁴³ Fernand Braudel and Ernest Labrousse, Histoire économique et sociale de la France 1660-1789: des derniers temps de l'âge seigneurial aux préludes de l'âge industriel (1660-1789) (Paris, 1970), p. 668.

⁴⁴ History, V, 5-6.

⁴⁵ Paris Theatre Audiences, p. 81.

As we have seen, the greatest number of spectators the Guénégaud parterre held at any one time was 607 at a performance of Thomas Corneille's La Devineresse on Sunday 31 December 1679 (R VII, 131). It generally contained far fewer people, however - frequently less than 100, and, on occasion, as few as the thirty-eight present at a performance of the same author's tragedy La Mort d'Achille on 5 January 1674 (R I, 80). The total and average parterre audiences per season at the Guénégaud were as follows:

TOTAL AND AVERAGE 'PARTERRE' AUDIENCES PER SEASON

SEASON	TOTAL	PERFORMANCES	AVERAGE
1673-4	24,611	108	228
1674-5	37,779	145	260
1675-6	38,523	146	264
1676-7	24,665	131	188
1677-8	33,611	144	233
1678-9	34,708	163	213
1679-80	45,968	179	257
1680-1	17,696	77	230

Not surprisingly, the parterre was one of the areas of the house most affected by the practice of raising prices au double. This was, no doubt, intentional; the bourgeois and nobleman who enjoyed seeing new works in an atmosphere of camaraderie being able to do so, while the more undesirable elements were at least temporarily weeded out. The effect of price rises on the parterre audience is shown in the following chart:

'PARTERRE' AUDIENCES 'A L'ORDRE' AND 'AU DOUBLE'

SEASON	<u>ORDRE</u>	PERFORMANCES	AVERAGE	<u>DOUBLE</u>	PERFORMANCES	AVERAGE
1673-4	22,773	90	253	1,838	18	102
1674-5	31,713	120	264	6,066	25	243
1675-6	30,427	96	317	8,096	50	162
1676-7	19,644	95	207	5,021	36	139
1677-8	32,438	150	216	1,173	13	90
1678-9	34,431	176	196	277	3	92
1679-80	42,555	154	276	3,413	25	136
1680-1	17,251	74	233	445	3	148

The high average attendance in the parterre au double in 1674-5 is no doubt a product of the phenomenal success enjoyed that season by the revival of Le Malade imaginaire and the first few performances of Circé. In fact, machine plays generally appear to have attracted more people than usual to this area of the house even at increased prices. Hence the particularly low attendances in 1673-4, 1677-8 and 1678-9, seasons in which there was no new machine play presented at the Guénégaud.

A great deal has been written about the taste of the parterre and its importance in the seventeenth century theatre, particularly where Molière is concerned.⁴⁶ Analysis of attendances in the parterre at the Guénégaud according to the genre of play that was being presented enables us to draw certain conclusions as to the taste of the members of the public who habitually occupied this area of the house.

'PARTERRE' ATTENDANCES BY GENRE⁴⁷

SEASON	GENRE	AUDIENCES	PERFORMANCES	AVERAGE
1673-4	comedy	19,834	81	245
	tragedy	4,038	23	176
	machine	—	—	—
	other	739	4	185

⁴⁶ See Lough, Paris Theatre Audiences, pp. 99-106; William D. Howarth, Molière: a Playwright and his Audience (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 37-9.

⁴⁷ For the purposes of this study, the machine plays of Thomas Corneille have been considered separately, so as to be able to assess the drawing power of their spectacle in comparison with the other genres. The category 'Other' includes Pierre Corneille's comédies-héroïques, Pulchérie and Tite et Bérénice, Quinault's tragicomedies, Agrippa, roi d'Albe, Les Coups de l'amour et de la fortune and Montauban's pastoral, Les Charmes de Félicie. Pierre Corneille's Le Cid has been entered as a tragedy, given that this was how it was known in this period. The genre of the lost work by Subligny, Le Désespoir extravagant is not known but there is little doubt that it was a comedy. In each case, only the genre of the main play presented has been considered, even though the petite pièce by which it was accompanied could, on occasion form the major attraction of the day's entertainment. It is for this reason that Montfleury's L'Ambigu comique is included in the category of tragedies.

1674-5	comedy	33,707	135	250
	tragedy	255	1	255
	machine	3,817	9	424
	other	-	-	-
1675-6	comedy	4,268	18	237
	tragedy	5,463	27	202
	machine	28,264	99	285
	other	528	2	264
1676-7	comedy	13,517	71	190
	tragedy	3,731	25	149
	machine	6,213	29	214
	other	1,204	6	201
1677-8	comedy	25,242	97	260
	tragedy	6,002	35	171
	machine	-	-	-
	other	2,367	12	197
1678-9	comedy	27,625	124	223
	tragedy	3,193	21	152
	machine	1,905	6	317
	other	1,985	12	165
1679-80	comedy	13,807	58	238
	tragedy	14,957	68	220
	machine	17,204	53	325
	other	-	-	-
1680-1	comedy	8,920	38	235
	tragedy	8,776	39	225
	machine	-	-	-
	other	-	-	-

What appears most strikingly from the above chart is that, with one exception, for every season comedy attracted a larger average audience to the parterre than tragedy. This was so even in 1679-80, when, for the first time, the number of performances of tragedies surpassed that of comedies, with the result that the total parterre audience was higher for tragedies. The single exception occurred in 1674-5, when one performance of L'Ambigu comique was given which attracted 255 people to the parterre. It should be remembered, however, that in addition to the tragedy of Dido, this work also includes three comic intermèdes, which may explain its popularity. What is more, given that of the 935 performances of comedies given at the Guénégaud, 639 or

68% were of plays by Molière and a further 29 were of Thomas Corneille's adaptation of Molière's Dom Juan, it is clear that the parterre remained very much faithful to their old favourite.

Equally apparent is the fact that for every season during which machine plays were performed, the average audience for them was higher than that for either tragedies or comedies. We are, therefore, able to say without hesitation that what attracted audiences to the parterre was first and foremost spectacle and secondly comedy, and it is clearly no coincidence that among the most popular of Molière's works at the Guénégaud were those which included a pronounced spectacular element.⁴⁸ It is interesting to consider these figures, bearing in mind Lough's comments as to the bourgeois nature of the parterre audience, in conjunction with the previously quoted lines from La Fontaine's 'Epître à M. de Niert' of 1677:

Des machines d'abord le surprenant spectacle
Eblouit le bourgeois, et fit crier miracle;
Mais la seconde fois il ne s'y pressa plus;
Il aima mieux le Cid, Horace, Héraclius.⁴⁹

This would certainly not appear to have been the case at the Guénégaud according to the evidence of the Registres. One explanation might be that the reduction in prices for the stage and first row of boxes had encouraged more of the bourgeois members of the audience to take up position there. In any event those who remained, together with the nobles, soldiers, lackeys, pages and other individuals who made up the parterre audience, clearly preferred the machine play and comedy to tragedy.

⁴⁸ See Appendix Three, 'Performances at the Guénégaud Theatre 1673-1680'.

⁴⁹ Oeuvres diverses, p. 617.

These attendance figures for the parterre also lead us to ask why, considering that it was comparatively unpopular with a large section of the audience, was the quantity of tragedy performed by the Guénégaud company increased during the last seasons of its activity? We must, however, remember the considerable disparity between the 15 sols charged for a normally priced ticket to the parterre and the 5 livres 10 sols for one to the stage and the first row of boxes. As John Lough remarks of the parterre: 'A study of these prices in relation to the takings of seventeenth century Paris theatres leads one to the obvious conclusion that while numerically extremely important, its contribution to the total receipts from each performance was much smaller than its numbers might at first suggest'.⁵⁰ He continues:

... from the point of view of the actors, although the often unruly band of male spectators crowded together in the parterre were an important section of the audience, their numerical preponderance was not matched by a corresponding contribution to the box-office receipts. Even if the society of the time had not accorded the respect which it did to birth and money, then men and women of blue blood or wealth who sat in the first row of boxes or on stage had an importance, from the financial point of view, which far outweighed their numbers. And, of course, both actors and playwrights did bestow upon the upper classes of the society of their age the respect which the prevailing social outlook demanded.⁵¹

We will return to this question when considering the audience which occupied the most expensive seats at the Guénégaud.

'TROISIEMES LOGES'

As we have seen, the troisièmes loges were an extremely unpopular area of the house with audiences at the Guénégaud. This was, no doubt, why they were treated advantageously after 1675, with tickets being made

⁵⁰ Paris Theatre Audiences, p. 108.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 111.

available at an intermediate price of 1 livre 10 sols, while other areas were still au double. At such performances, members of the audience would have been able to choose whether for the same sum to sit in this gallery or stand in the parterre. The following chart shows the overall occupation of the third row of boxes:

OCCUPATION OF THE 'TROISIEMES LOGES'

SEASON	AUDIENCE	PERFORMANCES	AVERAGE
1673-4	1,339	108	12
1674-5	2,733	145	19
1675-6	4,454	146	30
1676-7	1,358	131	10
1677-8	1,931	144	13
1678-9	2,074	163	13
1679-80	3,742	179	21
1680-1	769	77	10

This can be broken down according to ticket price as follows:

OCCUPATION OF THE 'TROISIEMES LOGES' BY TICKET PRICE

SEASON	PRICE	AUDIENCE	PERFORMANCES	AVERAGE
1673-4	simple	1,252	90	14
	reduced	-	-	-
	double	87	18	5
1674-5	simple	1,861	120	15
	reduced	-	-	-
	double	872	25	35
1675-6	simple	1,988	70	28
	reduced	2,209	57	39
	double	257	19	13
1676-7	simple	833	92	9
	reduced	454	28	16
	double	71	11	6
1677-8	simple	1,792	129	14
	reduced	139	15	9
	double	-	-	-
1678-9	simple	2,053	160	13
	reduced	-	-	-
	double	21	3	7

1679-80	simple	3,467	149	23
	reduced	156	13	12
	double	119	17	7
1680-1	simple	729	74	10
	reduced	40	3	13
	double	-	-	-

It is clear from the above that the use of an intermediate price level was successful in attracting the public to the third row of boxes in greater numbers. Not surprisingly, for every season where it was employed, the average audience at such performances was larger than at performances au double. More interesting, however, is the fact that for three seasons it was even higher than that at performances à l'ordre. Certain members of the public obviously appreciated being given the opportunity to see recent works without having to wait for the second row of boxes to be reduced to their usual 1 livre 10 sols price level. In only one season did the average for performances au double exceed that for performances à l'ordre. This was in 1674-5, when 792 of the 872 spectators who attended au double were present at the first nine performances of Circé. Otherwise the average audience for performances au double would have consisted of five spectators.

Nevertheless, a highest seasonal average of 35 appears very low when we remember that the third row of boxes is recorded as having seated 111 people at a performance of La Devineresse on 18 February 1680, and its capacity has been estimated at approximately 160 spectators. We are forced, therefore, to ask why it was that this area of the house should have been so unpopular with the public. One reason may have been that it was traditionally associated with lackeys and servants. This is suggested by De Visé's report in Le Mercure galant that at Lully's Académie Royale de Musique, 'on a retranché les troisièmes loges à la livrée, et elles s'occupent sans honte par des

personnes de qualité'.⁵² This was possible at the above theatre thanks to an ordonnance of 22 January 1674 which forbade, 'généralement à tous gens de livrée, sous quelque prétexte que ce soit, de se présenter à la porte de l'Académie pour y entrer, même en payant, à peine de punition exemplaire'.⁵³ According to John Lough, it was not until the first years of the eighteenth century that a similar ban was issued concerning the Comédie-Italienne and the Comédie-Française.⁵⁴ Its apparent unpopularity notwithstanding, members of the nobility did on occasion, as we have seen, elect to sit in this area of the house. As they are unlikely to have rubbed shoulders with lackeys and servants, it would seem that a similar prohibition was in operation at the Guénégaud prior to this date.

LOGES HAUTES

Occupation of the deuxièmes loges or loges hautes at the Guénégaud theatre was as follows:

OCCUPATION OF THE 'DEUXIEMES LOGES'

SEASON	AUDIENCE	PERFORMANCES	AVERAGE
1673-4	6,480	108	60
1674-5	9,484	145	65
1675-6	11,553	146	79
1676-7	7,216	131	51
1677-8	9,126	144	63
1678-9	8,480	163	52
1679-80	16,908	179	94
1680-1	5,409	77	70

Most striking here are the significantly raised figures for 1675-6 and 1679-80. The former was no doubt due to the successes of Le Malade imaginaire and Circé. The latter may well have been due to the success

⁵² (March 1678), p. 18.

⁵³ Delamare, Traité, I, 475.

⁵⁴ Paris Theatre Audiences, pp. 77-8.

of La Devineresse. 1679-80 was, however, the season in which Mlle Champmeslé joined the Guénégaud company, when for the first time the number of performances of tragedy exceeded those of comedy. Could this have played a factor in attracting increased audiences to the second row of boxes? If so La Fontaine's statement concerning the popularity of tragedy with the bourgeois might be seen to be confirmed.

The following chart shows the different average attendances at performances à l'ordre and those au double:

OCCUPATION OF THE 'DEUXIEMES LOGES' BY TICKET PRICE

SEASON	PRICE	AUDIENCE	PERFORMANCES	AVERAGE
1673-4	simple	5,739	90	64
	double	741	18	41
1674-5	simple	8,434	120	70
	double	1,050	25	42
1675-6	simple	6,770	70	97
	double	2,370	76	63
1676-7	simple	4,846	92	53
	double	2,370	39	61
1677-8	simple	8,531	129	66
	double	595	15	40
1678-9	simple	8,386	160	52
	double	94	3	31
1679-80	simple	14,826	149	99
	double	2,082	30	69
1680-1	simple	5,224	74	71
	double	185	3	62

Not surprisingly, for every season but one, average attendances were higher for performances à l'ordre than for those au double. The exception occurred, however, not as one might have thought, in 1674-5, when extraordinarily large crowds were attracted by the first performances of Circé, and when, as we have seen, average attendances in the troisièmes loges were higher au double than à l'ordre. Rather, it

was in 1676-7, when attendances were high at the first runs of Phèdre et Hippolyte and Le Festin de pierre, and, to a lesser extent, Le Triomphe des dames.

Next we will turn to consider the occupation of the loges hautes according to the genre of work presented.

OCCUPATION OF THE 'DEUXIEMES LOGES' BY GENRE

SEASON	GENRE	AUDIENCE	PERFORMANCES	AVERAGE
1673-4	comedy	5,168	81	64
	tragedy	1,175	23	51
	machine	-	-	-
	other	137	4	34
1674-5	comedy	9,039	135	67
	tragedy	55	1	55
	machine	390	9	43
	other	-	-	-
1675-6	comedy	1,049	18	58
	tragedy	1,668	27	62
	machine	8,686	99	88
	other	150	2	75
1676-7	comedy	3,652	71	51
	tragedy	1,325	25	53
	machine	1,914	29	66
	other	325	6	54
1677-8	comedy	6,884	97	71
	tragedy	1,648	35	47
	machine	-	-	-
	other	594	12	49
1678-9	comedy	6,711	124	54
	tragedy	873	21	42
	machine	507	6	84
	other	389	12	32
1679-80	comedy	3,889	58	67
	tragedy	4,930	68	72
	machine	8,089	53	153
	other	-	-	-
1680-1	comedy	2,567	38	67
	tragedy	2,842	39	73
	machine	-	-	-
	other	-	-	-

For every season but one during which machine plays were performed, they attracted the highest average audience to this area of the house, most notably 153 for the revival of L'Inconnu and the first run of La Devineresse in 1679-80. The single exception is the surprisingly low average of forty-three for the first nine performances of Circé. It would seem, as we have noted above, that even for this most popular of works, a considerable proportion of the audience in the loges hautes was deterred from attending by the application of the double.

As far as the opposition of tragedy to comedy is concerned, for the first two seasons the latter was more popular with this area of the house than the former. Then, interestingly, these positions were reversed in 1675-6 and 1676-7.⁵⁵ Comedy bounced back in 1677-8 and 1678-9, no doubt due to the shortage of tragedies available to the Guénégaud company, even given their policy on revivals. This state of affairs was remedied, however, once Mlle Champmeslé had joined the company in 1679-80, and the ascendancy of tragedy was maintained in the Guénégaud's final season, 1680-1.

We have already seen that, according to evidence quoted by John Lough, when certain bourgeois merchants attended the theatre, they, themselves, stood in the parterre, but took boxes for their wives.⁵⁶ The location of these boxes is not specified, but it would seem more likely that they went to the second row rather than the first. There is ground, therefore, to see the loges hautes as an area frequented by the bourgeoisie. From our analysis of figures relating to attendances in this area of the house, it is clear that tragedy was as popular as

⁵⁵ In fact, in 1675-6, most popular after the machine plays presented were the two performances of Pierre Corneille's comédie-héroïque, Pulchérie.

⁵⁶ Jean Donneau De Visé, Zélinde, ou la Véritable Critique de l'Ecole des femmes et la critique de la Critique (Paris, 1663), in Lough, Paris Theatre Audiences, p. 89.

comedy with the audiences who took up position there. Indeed, during the final two seasons of the Guénégaud's activity, it could be said to have been more popular. La Fontaine's statement as to the bourgeois taste for tragedy would, therefore, appear to be borne out where this area of the house is concerned, with the proviso that the bourgeois seems to have preferred tragedy over comedy rather than tragedy over the machine play.

'PREMIERES LOGES', 'THEATRE' AND 'AMPHITHEATRE'

As we have seen, these three categories are frequently bracketed together in the Guénégaud Registres, and I have further suggested that figures relating to them might have been grouped together on other occasions without it being explicitly stated. It is, therefore, necessary similarly to group them together when attempting to analyse attendances in these three most expensive areas of the house. Overall attendances there were as follows:

OCCUPATION OF THE 'PREMIERES LOGES', 'THEATRE' AND 'AMPHITHEATRE'

SEASON	AUDIENCE	PERFORMANCES	AVERAGE
1673-4	3,998	108	37
1674-5	7,010	145	48
1675-6	7,576	146	52
1676-7	4,716	131	36
1677-8	5,791	144	40
1678-9	5,987	163	37
1679-80	16,182	179	90
1680-1	4,226	77	55

This audience was clearly very small when compared with that in the parterre, especially bearing in mind that these figures represent three different areas of the house taken together. Nevertheless, as John Lough maintains, it had an influence out of all proportion to its size, thanks to the respect commanded at that time by members of the nobility and the considerable disparity between the price of the cheapest and most expensive theatre tickets. It would have been sound financial

common-sense on the part of the Guénégaud company to attempt to provide the rich and influential members of this audience with the type of theatrical entertainment they wanted.

As we have seen, during the course of the 1676-7 season, ticket prices for the stage and first row of boxes were reduced à l'ordre from 5 livres 10 sols to 3 livres. The following chart shows occupation of the most expensive areas of the house according to prices charged.

OCCUPATION OF THE 'PREMIERES LOGES', 'THEATRE' AND 'AMPHITHEATRE
ACCORDING TO THE TICKET PRICE FOR THE 'PREMIERES LOGES' AND 'THEATRE'⁵⁷

SEASON	PRICE	AUDIENCE	PERFORMANCES	AVERAGE
1673-4	5* 10 ^s	3,998	108	37
	3*	-	-	-
1674-5	5* 10 ^s	7,010	145	48
	3*	-	-	-
1675-6	5* 10 ^s	7,576	146	52
	3*	-	-	-
1676-7	5* 10 ^s	4,143	114	36
	3*	573	17	34
1677-8	5* 10 ^s	1,457	31	47
	3*	4,334	113	38
1678-9	5* 10 ^s	782	12	65
	3*	5,205	151	34
1679-80	5* 10 ^s	3,848	34	113
	3*	12,334	145	85
1680-1	5* 10 ^s	194	3	65
	3*	4,032	74	54

⁵⁷ All three categories are taken together for the reasons outlined above, and also so as to be able to compare attendances at the normal and reduced prices. For the same reason, I have included figures corresponding to the capacity of boxes taken as units, even though box prices were unaffected by the reduction, as well as the odd tickets that continued to be taken at 5 livres 10 sols, which I believe to refer to individual places in the loges d'avant-scène. In the interests of clarity, I have only taken into consideration occasions when tickets for both the stage and first row of boxes were available at the reduced price.

Thus, the reduction in prices does not appear to have brought people flocking to the most expensive seats; and there were always people prepared to pay for the privilege of seeing a work while it was still a novelty, since for every season where tickets were available at the reduced price level, the average attendance for performances at which it was applied was exceeded by the average for those at which prices were au double. This clearly vindicates the Guénégaud company's policy, once a two tier price scale had been introduced for the stage and first row of boxes, of maintaining these areas at the higher level longer than the other areas of the house. A large proportion of those people who habitually occupied the other areas were no doubt less prepared or less able to pay the increased prices imposed by the application of the double, with the result that attendances fell off severely after a short time. There would then come a point when attendances would be so low that the revenue from a particular area, even at the raised price level, would be less than that from the same area at a lower price level but with a larger audience. By reducing prices for some sections of the theatre the Guénégaud company was, therefore, able to raise attendances and thus its income without unduly affecting those patrons in the more expensive seats, who continued to enjoy the exclusivity of their own particular areas.

In addition, we see from the above chart that attendances in 1679-80 were outstanding both à l'ordre and au double, though with the latter still exceeding the former. Whether this was due to the success of the Guénégaud company's policy on the revival of tragedies for performances à l'ordre or to the popularity of La Devineresse or Boyer's tragedy Agamemnon for those au double, we should be able to determine when we examine the breakdown of these attendances by genre.

OCCUPATION OF THE 'PREMIERES LOGES', 'THEATRE' AND 'AMPHITHEATRE' BY
GENRE

SEASON	GENRE	AUDIENCE	PERFORMANCES	AVERAGE
1673-4	comedy	3,202	81	39
	tragedy	718	23	31
	machine	-	-	-
	other	78	4	19
1674-5	comedy	4,219	135	31
	tragedy	10	1	10
	machine	2,781	9	309
	other	-	-	-
1675-6	comedy	440	18	24
	tragedy	1,531	27	57
	machine	5,540	99	56
	other	65	2	32
1676-7	comedy	2,154	71	30
	tragedy	1,491	25	60
	machine	892	29	31
	other	179	6	30
1677-8	comedy	4,102	97	42
	tragedy	1,255	35	36
	machine	-	-	-
	other	434	12	36
1678-9	comedy	4,710	124	38
	tragedy	552	21	26
	machine	516	6	86
	other	209	12	17
1679-80	comedy	3,542	58	61
	tragedy	6,211	68	91
	machine	6,429	53	121
	other	-	-	-
1680-1	comedy	1,880	38	49
	tragedy	2,346	39	60
	machine	-	-	-
	other	-	-	-

The most outstanding figure in the above chart is the extraordinarily high average attendance of 309 at the first nine performances of Circé in 1674-5. This, when compared with the average attendance for machine plays the following season of fifty-six, could be seen to be revealing of the attitudes of the audience who frequented these areas of the house. They appear to have rushed to see the work

while it was a novelty, with attendances falling off rapidly once it was into its run. It should be remembered, however, that there was at this time no financial disadvantage for those occupying the most expensive seats to seeing a work at its first few performances. In fact, the machine play does not appear to have been as popular with audiences in these areas of the house as it was with those in others. In 1675-6 and 1676-7, the average audience for machine plays was exceeded by that for tragedies, which no doubt encouraged the Guénégaud company to concentrate more of their energies on the production of tragedy and temporarily abandon the machine play. These positions were reversed, however, in 1678-9, when a certain vogue appears to have been enjoyed by the revival of L'Inconnu which attracted an average audience of eighty-six, greater than the fifty-six for the season of its first performance; and 1679-80 saw the very striking success of La Devineresse. It is interesting to note, however, that although La Devineresse certainly enjoyed a succès de scandale, average attendances at both tragedies and comedies were this season higher than for any other.

As far as the popularity of tragedy versus that of comedy is concerned, comedy attracted a larger average audience in the first season of the Guénégaud's activity, and as only one tragedy was performed in the second this is hardly representative. 1675-6 saw tragedy outstrip comedy, a trend that was maintained in 1676-7. In 1677-8 and 1678-9, comedy once more gained the ascendancy, possibly due to the scarcity of tragedies discussed above. With the advent of Mlle Champmelé, however, a sudden leap in the fortunes of tragedy occurred, bringing about a significant increase in the size of the average audience, with tragedy maintaining its lead over comedy in the final season of the Guénégaud's activity. This pattern is almost identical to that of the average attendances in the second row of boxes classified

according to genre. A clear divide in taste appears to have existed, therefore, between the parterre who preferred comedy and the occupants of the stage, amphithéâtre and both tiers of boxes who seemingly preferred tragedy. Given certain of the latter's social influence and their greater contribution at the box-office, it is not surprising that the Guénégaud company should have sought to increase the amount of tragedy in its programmes. The great achievement of Thomas Corneille was that through his machine plays he furnished the Guénégaud with popular attractions to supplement the comedies of Molière, but which also succeeded in appealing to all elements of the Guénégaud audience. He thus provided the company with a degree of financial security, enabling them by 1677 to have paid off their debts and to have emerged from the shadows of the circumstances of 1673 ready to face new challenges, which they did with enterprise and determination.

THE GUENEGAUD THEATRE 1673-1680

AND THE MACHINE PLAYS OF THOMAS CORNEILLE

by

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Two Volumes

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CHAPTER SEVEN - THOMAS CORNEILLE

Having considered the founding of the Guénégaud company, the design of the theatre it occupied, its methods of operation, the main features of its repertory, and the audience it attracted, I would now like to turn to consider one particular aspect of its production - the machine plays. As we have seen, from its very inception it was believed that the Guénégaud would concentrate on the presentation of works of this type. But to do so was not as straightforward as had once been the case, due to the defensive steps taken by Lully to protect his privilège; and it was not until their second season that the company, after much debate, finally resolved to commit themselves to the necessary expense. Curiously, therefore, the man to whom the Guénégaud turned in these difficult times, Thomas Corneille, was someone who had no previous experience of working on spectacular productions, although he did have a long and distinguished career behind him. He was, however, assisted in his work for the Guénégaud by a past master of the genre of the machine play in the person of his friend and colleague, Jean Donneau De Visé. I propose, therefore, to preface my study of Circé and the other machine plays given by Thomas to the Guénégaud company with a brief survey of his life and works prior to 1675, concentrating on those aspects which look forward to his subsequent productions for the Guénégaud, and in particular his friendship with De Visé.

CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION

Thomas Corneille was born in Rouen on 20 August 1625.¹ His eldest brother, Pierre, 'le Grand Corneille', was nineteen years old at the time of Thomas's birth.² Like Pierre, Thomas studied at the Jesuit college in Rouen, and it was at school that he wrote his first play, as De Boze relates: 'il composa en vers latins une pièce que son régent trouva si fort à son gré, qu'il l'adopta et la substitua à celle qu'il devait faire représenter par ses écoliers, pour la distribution des prix de l'année'.³ Thierry sees this as an important first step towards a theatrical career, especially as he believes Thomas to have performed in his own work (p. ii). We know Thomas took part in a 'petite pièce de circonstance' composed by P. de Valognes to follow his Latin tragedy, Jézabel.⁴ Reference to Thomas's acting ability and prodigious memory is found in De Visé's obituary of his friend in Le Mercure galant of January 1710: 'Tous ceux qui l'ont connu particulièrement ont été témoins que lorsqu'il était prié de lire ses pièces dans quelques compagnies, ce qui était autrefois fort en usage, il les récitait mieux qu'aucun comédien n'aurait pu faire, sans rien lire. Il était si sûr de

¹ For further information on Thomas's life and works see, notably, Edouard Thierry, 'Notice sur Thomas Corneille' in Thomas Corneille, Théâtre Complet (Paris, 1881); Reynier, Thomas Corneille; P. Cox, 'The Comedies of Thomas Corneille' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Exeter, 1961); David A. Collins, Thomas Corneille: protean dramatist (The Hague, 1966); Christopher J. Gossip, 'Composition et représentation chez Thomas Corneille', Studi francesi, 12 (1968), pp. 471-6, 'Roman Tragedies', 'Timocrate reconsidered', Studi francesi, 17 (1972), pp. 222-37, 'Chronologie'; Eliane Herz Fischler, 'La Dramaturgie de Thomas Corneille' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Université de Paris III, 1977).

² Reynier, Thomas Corneille, p. 1.

³ Claude Gros De Boze, 'Eloge de Thomas Corneille prononcé dans l'Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres à la rentrée publique après Pâques 1710', in Thomas Corneille, Oeuvres (Paris, 1817), pp. 57-65.

⁴ Reynier, Thomas Corneille, p. 2.

sa mémoire que souvent il ne portait point ses pièces sur lui' (pp. 280-1). This is in marked contrast to Pierre, who freely admitted that his lines could only give pleasure in the mouths of other people.⁵ While at school, Thomas took part in the Palinods poetry competition in Rouen, where his brother Antoine had previously won prizes.⁶ In 1640 or 1641, Thomas won the Miroir d'argent for an ode in French verse which, in accordance with the custom, was recited during the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.⁷

Thomas probably remained at school until 1642 or 1643. Aside from formal studies, his brother Pierre is widely believed to have played a significant part in his education, and, indeed, to have instructed him in the art of writing for the theatre.⁸ Thomas later recognised how much he owed to his brother and spoke of the lessons 'qu'il avait reçues de sa propre bouche'.⁹ It is also supposed that it was Pierre who had

⁵ In a letter to Pellisson of 1658, Pierre included the following lines which he claimed to have written about himself some twenty years before:

J'ai la plume féconde, et la bouche stérile,
Bon galant au théâtre, et fort mauvais en ville;
Et l'on peut rarement m'écouter sans ennui,
Que quand je me produis par la bouche d'autrui.
(Oeuvres complètes, ed. Stegmann, p. 858)

His nephew, Fontenelle, wrote of him: 'Sa prononciation n'était pas tout à fait nette; il lisait ses vers avec force, mais sans grâce.... Il n'ornait pas ce qu'il disait; et pour trouver le grand Corneille, il le fallait lire' ('Vie de Corneille', Ibid., p. 25).

⁶ Louis Passy, 'Thomas Corneille et Jacqueline Pascal aux Palinods de Rouen', Recueil des travaux de la Société Libre d'Agriculture, Sciences, Arts et Belles-Lettres de l'Eure, 3 (1905), pp. 13-23 (p. 19).

⁷ Reynier, Thomas Corneille, p. 2; Passy gives the earlier date ('Thomas Corneille', p. 19).

⁸ Reynier, Thomas Corneille, p. 3.

⁹ 'Discours de réception à l'Académie Française', in Reynier, Thomas Corneille, p. 3.

Thomas learn Spanish. There was a large community of Spaniards living in Rouen at that time, and a knowledge of the language was widespread. Pierre, himself, studied it with M. de Chalon, the former Secrétaire des Commandements of Marie de Medicis, and Bourrienne assumes that Thomas either studied with or shortly after his brother.¹⁰ Thomas certainly put his knowledge of Spanish to good use in the course of his career, for all but one of his eleven comedies were adaptated from Spanish comedias.

Reynier states categorically: 'Il n'est pas douteux que, dès cette époque, le jeune Corneille avait l'intention bien arrêtée de suivre la même voie que son frère et de rechercher ces succès de théâtre qui sont les plus séduisants de tous' (pp. 3-4). If his brother's success was not sufficient to inspire him,¹¹ there was a great deal of theatrical activity in Rouen at that time: the Hôtel de Bourgogne and Marais troupes paid frequent visits to the town and, in 1643, the Illustre Théâtre company of Molière and Madeleine Béjart also performed there, and there may well have been some contact between this troupe and the Corneille family.¹² However, the theatre was, then as now, a risky profession, and in case of failure Thomas studied law at the University of Caen. He took his degree on 26 May 1646 at the age of twenty-one, but only obtained the title of avocat three years later on 21 October 1649.¹³ Indeed, it is possible that Thomas may never have worked as a lawyer, since he is at no time referred to as an avocat either by himself or others.

¹⁰ V. Bourrienne, 'Thomas Corneille: sa famille, ses premières années (documents inédits)', Revue Catholique de Normandie, 1 (1891), pp. 51-65, 141-64, 203-12 (p. 144).

¹¹ By 1642, Pierre had already seen sixteen of his plays produced in Paris, among them L'Illusion comique, Le Cid, Horace, Cinna, Polyeucte and Le Menteur.

¹² Bourrienne, 'Thomas Corneille', pp. 142-3.

¹³ Reynier, Thomas Corneille, p. 4.

DEBUT

Reynier explains the three year gap between Thomas taking his degree and his becoming a lawyer by claiming that it was at this time that he was making his theatrical début (p. 4). His comedy Les Engagements du hasard was performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, probably in 1647.¹⁴ This was the first in the series of adaptations of Spanish comedias with which Thomas began his career.¹⁵ As De Boze says of this phase of his work for the stage: 'Il commença par mettre au théâtre quantité de pièces espagnoles, dont on ne croyait pas qu'il fût possible de conserver l'esprit et le sel, si l'on voulait les dégager des licences et des fictions qui leur sont particulières et que notre scène n'admet point'.

Les Engagements du hasard was not published until some considerable time after its first performance. It shares a privilège dated 12 March 1651 with Thomas's Le Feint Astrologue and Pierre's Nicomède and Andromède. Indeed, it was Pierre who took out the privilège on his own and his brother's behalf. The privilège was registered on 29 November 1653, and Les Engagements du hasard was finally 'achevé d'imprimer' on 9 December 1656.¹⁶ This delay of five and a half years between the privilège and the achevé is exceptional in Thomas's theatre, but is explained by a passage in his Epître to the work: 'Vous savez que je penchais entièrement à le supprimer, et que n'étant qu'un premier essai de poésie, que je n'avais osé avouer quand il parut d'abord sur le théâtre de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne, je faisais dessein de n'en jamais

¹⁴ Gossip, 'Chronologie', p. 667. Unless otherwise specified, all dates relating to the composition and production of Thomas's plays are taken from this work.

¹⁵ It was based on Calderón's Los empeños de un acaso with supplementary material from the same author's Casa con dos puertas mala es de guardar (Cox, 'Comedies', pp. 260-2).

¹⁶ Gossip, 'Chronologie', p. 666.

permettre l'impression'. Despite Thomas's doubts about his work, and his modesty in not admitting to its authorship even when it was published, it seems that Les Engagements du hasard enjoyed a degree of success sufficient, according to the Parfaict brothers, to arouse the jealousy of certain other playwrights.¹⁷ And Gossip cites Mouhy who wrote that the play 'eut beaucoup de succès et donna une grande idée des talents de l'auteur'.¹⁸

Reynier explains that the play was performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne rather than at the Marais, to which Pierre had been faithful for so many years, by the fact that Floridor, a close friend of the Corneille brothers, left the Marais at the end of 1643 to transfer to the Hôtel de Bourgogne. Reynier concludes that it was he who took Thomas's play to the Hôtel de Bourgogne company and persuaded them to accept it (p. 5). As we have seen, it was common for an actor to serve as an intermediary between an author and his troupe.

LE FEINT ASTROLOGUE

Thomas is generally thought to have followed Les Engagements du hasard with Le Feint Astrologue, adapted from Calderón's comedia El Astrologo fingido. This order is not absolutely certain, however, since in his Epître Thomas calls Le Feint Astrologue his 'coup d'essai', whereas Les Engagements du hasard was 'un premier essai de poésie'. As the first edition of the former work dates from 1651, it is likely that it was the first of Thomas's plays to be published, and may even have been the first to be performed. Gossip points out that, as with Les Engagements du hasard, Thomas hesitated to publish Le Feint Astrologue,

¹⁷ François and Claude Parfaict, Histoire du théâtre français depuis son origine jusqu'à présent, 13 vols (Paris, 1745-9), reprinted 3 vols (Geneva, 1969), in Reynier, p. 4.

¹⁸ 'Roman Tragedies', pp. 49-50.

quoting a passage from his dedication to the first edition which was later suppressed: 'Pour moi, je me serais contenté du succès qu'elle a eu au théâtre, sans l'abandonner à la presse, si je n'avais voulu détromper beaucoup de personnes qui en ont cru mon frère l'auteur, à cause de la conformité du nom qui m'est commun avec lui'.¹⁹ It is hard to see how this could be, since again Thomas declined to put his name to the published work. As for the theatre at which it was performed, it seems that once more this was the Hôtel de Bourgogne, since Thomas calls the astrologer's valet Philippin rather than Jodelet, the name of the celebrated comic actor then with the Marais company.²⁰

Le Feint Astrologue is interesting in that we find in it for the first time, at a very early stage in Thomas's career, several of those themes that were to be so important in his work for the Guénégaud theatre. We cannot, however, credit Thomas with any great originality in this matter, since for the most part these were already present in the Spanish model. Nevertheless, it would seem significant that Thomas should have chosen to adapt this particular comedia. Above all, Le Feint Astrologue reflects emerging doubts related to aspects of the seventeenth-century passion for the supernatural, an interest Thomas was to attempt to appeal to again with La Devineresse, where the central character is a much-fêted fake fortune-teller, and La Pierre philosophale, in which he ridicules alchemists and Rosicrucians. It can be seen, therefore, as the first instance of Thomas taking his subjects from the society around him, as he was to continue to do most obviously with Le Berger extravagant, La Pierre philosophale, and La Devineresse, with L'Inconnu and Le Triomphe des dames also representing a certain aspect of contemporary reality.

¹⁹ 'Chronologie', p. 668.

²⁰ Lancaster, History, II, 753.

In Le Feint Astrologue we find detailed descriptions of what are supposedly arcane astrological practices. The astrologer, Dom Fernand, 'contemple le ciel aux nuits les plus obscures; / Il feuillette un grand livre, et fait mille figures' (II, 2). A character asks him:

Ne me fîtes-vous pas encore hier au soir
Remarquer un jardin dans un large miroir;
Et quelque temps après n'y vis-je pas paraître
Un homme qu'attendait madame à sa fenêtre?
(II,5)

and says of him in the same scene: 'Il a fait devant moi parler une peinture'. Also, Léonor asks him to conjure up the spirit of her lover who is supposedly in another part of Spain, which he pretends to do by means of a note she gives him.

The similarities between this work and La Devineresse are obvious. In Act II, scene 13 of the latter play, the Marquise wishes to see her lover who is far away. The fortune-teller, Mme Jobin supposedly makes him appear to her in a mirror. The Marquise then writes him a note and immediately, by means of the mirror, sees him receive it. A reply falls from the ceiling saying that he will return. In Act IV, scene 1, The Financier tells the Marquis that Mme Jobin showed him the woman he would marry in a mirror. A different reflective surface is used when she shows La Giraudière the whereabouts of a stolen pair of pistols and the identity of their thief in a basin of water (I, 15); and in La Devineresse it is not a portrait which speaks, but rather a disembodied head (V, 4).

Le Feint Astrologue is also revealing of the attitude of people of both high and low birth who flocked to consult astrologers. As Dom Fernand says:

Je connais trop le peuple et son dérèglement:
Il hait cette science, et croit que qui l'exerce
Doit avec les démons avoir quelque commerce. (II,2)

This superstition and credulity on the part of the clients, together with their paradoxical fear and fascination, is precisely that mentality that is highlighted in La Devineresse. This brings us to the second of the major themes that we find for the first time in Le Feint Astrologue - that of enlightening the public as to their folly in holding mistaken and possibly dangerous beliefs. Dom Fernand is only pretending to be an astrologer in order to get his revenge on Lucrèce who prefers Dom Juan, and there are constant references to the trickery of astrologers: 'Souvent un astrologue en mensonge nous paye, / Et l'effet rarement confirme son rapport' (II,3), 'Le meilleur astrologue est le plus grand menteur' (IV,5), as well as to the gullibility of their clients: 'Et même en un besoin, par quelque préambule, / Je brouillerais l'esprit d'une femme crédule' (III,1), 'Aussi, nous connaissons combien il ~~est~~ est de sots' (II,5). This gullibility is parodied in burlesque fashion in Act V, when Phil~~ip~~pin convinces another valet that he has learned enough of his master's art to be able to transport him back to his village on a magic flying mule. He proceeds to blindfold him, tie him to a fence and create the effect of wind using a pair of bellows without his trickery being discovered. This is in many ways similar to Act III of La Pierre philosophale, in which Maugis is told that he will be transported to a heavenly garden on the back of a magic dolphin, there to be received into the order of Rosicrucians.

But whereas in Le Feint Astrologue Thomas was largely following his model in exploiting a folly of his age for comic advantage,²¹ La Devineresse was ostensibly written with the didactic aim of alerting the public to the practices of people like Mme Jobin who deceive their

²¹ On the extent of Thomas's borrowing from Calderon, see Cox, 'Comedies', pp. 263-6.

clients for financial advantage. The reality was, however, watered down considerably so as to make it suitable for theatrical consumption. This aim is made clear in the lines of verse which headed the first edition:

Vous que les devineresses
Ont su tant de fois duper,
Venez, pour vous détromper,
Apprendre ici leurs adresses.²²

Similarly, in his Au lecteur to La Pierre philosophale, Thomas claims to have written his play so as to make people aware of the folly of the search for the philosopher's stone and the beliefs of the Rosicrucians:

Comme il y a beaucoup de folie parmi ceux qui veulent trouver quelque vérité dans les extravagantes imaginations des cabalistes, on a cru qu'une satire publique était l'unique moyen de les faire revenir dans leur bon sens. C'est par là qu'on corrige plus aisément les faiblesses et les vices et c'est par là que la comédie devient d'une grande utilité.

One must, of course, be wary of taking such claims at face value, since Thomas was no doubt just as motivated by the financial gain to be accrued from such a popular topic as he was by the thought of the public good.

FAMILY LIFE

In 1650, by a contract dated 9 July, Thomas married Marguerite de Lampérière, the sister of his brother Pierre's wife Marie. The two couples were very close and, indeed, shared a house in perfect harmony for several years, as De Boze relates: 'Ce n'était qu'une même maison, qu'un même domestique. Enfin après plus de vingt-cinq ans de mariage, les deux frères n'avaient pas encore songé à faire le partage des biens

²² Thomas Corneille and Donneau De Visé, La Devineresse, edited by P. J. Yarrow (Exeter, 1971), p. 3.

de leurs femmes'.²³ The division was only made on 31 October 1685, the year after Pierre's death.²⁴ The relationship between the two brothers and their wives has provided a source of literary inspiration, resulting in three plays: Grétry's Une Matinée des deux Corneille, Romieu and Monnières's Pierre and Thomas Corneille, and Goujet's Les Deux Corneille.²⁵ Better known, is Ducis's poem 'Les Bonnes Soeurs ou le ménage des deux Corneille', which reiterates the claims made by De Boze:

Les deux maisons n'en faisaient qu'une;
La clef, la bourse était commune...
Les enfants confondaient leurs jeux,
Les pères se prêtaient leurs rimes,
Le même vin coulait pour eux.²⁶

The fourth line above refers to the well-known 'trappe' story, found for the first time in Voisenon's Anecdotes littéraires: 'Thomas travaillait bien plus facilement que Pierre, et, quand celui-ci cherchait une rime, il levait une trappe et la demandait à Thomas, qui la lui donnait aussitôt'.²⁷

'DOM BERTRAND DE CIGARRAL' AND 'L'AMOUR A LA MODE'

The next two works Thomas produced are among his best known. Dom Bertrand de Cigarral and L'Amour à la mode share a privilège dated 24 December 1651. Again, the privilège was issued to Pierre, and also included the latter's Pertharite. Dom Bertrand de Cigarral was achevé

²³ Reynier, Thomas Corneille, p. 6.

²⁴ Bouquet, 'Points obscurs', p. 110.

²⁵ André Joseph Grétry, Une Matinée des deux Corneille, comédie vaudeville anecdotique en un acte et en prose (Paris, 1804), François Auguste Romieu and Monnières, Pierre and Thomas Corneille (Paris, 1823). The only reference I can find to the last work is in Herz Fischler, 'Dramaturgie', p. 28.

²⁶ In Reynier, Thomas Corneille, p. 6.

²⁷ (Paris, 1880), p. 34.

d'imprimer on 30 December 1651, whereas L'Amour à la mode had to wait until 30 April 1653. Dom Bertrand de Cigarral was probably, therefore, performed first in 1651. There are conflicting views as to the theatre at which both it and L'Amour à la mode were first given.²⁸

Dom Bertrand de Cigarral was a great success. De Visé tells us that it was performed more than twenty times at Court.²⁹ It was subsequently in the repertory of Molière's troupe, being given a total of fourteen times. It was also, as we have seen, briefly revived at the Guénégaud, where it was performed twice in 1677-8.

Whereas both of these plays are based on Spanish comedias,³⁰ L'Amour à la mode marks a departure in that for the first time Thomas transposes his plot to a French setting. The initial stage direction notes simply that 'la scène est à Paris' (I,1),³¹ but it is possible to determine the location more exactly from references in the text. Thus, Deierkauf-Holsboer writes: 'on voit sur la scène le jardin des Tuileries et les rues avoisinantes'.³² Presenting as it does a precise contemporary reality, L'Amour à la mode could, therefore, be seen as another manifestation of the theme of social criticism in Thomas's work, in that, as Lancaster points out, one set of characters holds up to ridicule the romantic ideals of the other.³³

²⁸ Gossip, 'Chronologie', pp. 669-71.

²⁹ Mercure galant (January 1710), p. 273.

³⁰ Entre bobos anda el juego by Rojas Zorrilla and El amor al uso by Antonio de Solís (Cox, 'Comedies', pp. 267-73).

³¹ Thomas Corneille, L'Amour à la mode, comédie, edited by Colette Cosnier (Paris, 1973).

³² Mise en scène, p. 56.

³³ History, III, 47.

'LE BERGER EXTRAVAGANT'

Thomas developed this theme even further in his next work, Le Berger extravagant, based on Sorel's burlesque novel of the same title. This was probably first performed in 1653 at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, although the evidence on the latter point is slight.³⁴ Le Berger extravagant has as its subject the madness of Lysis, who believes himself to be a Golden-Age shepherd as the result of reading too many pastoral novels. The pastoral had fallen from favour since Sorel's novel had first appeared in 1627, but there was a sudden revival of interest in the late 1640's and early 1650's. A new five volume edition of Honoré d'Urfé's L'Astrée appeared in 1647, Du Ryer's Amaryllis was finally published in 1650, seventeen years after its composition, and Tristan l'Hermite reworked a comedy by Rotrou, added satyrs and called it a pastoral.³⁵ This work, also entitled Amaryllis, was produced in 1652 and was a great success. Indeed, it is referred to in Thomas's Le Berger extravagant as one of the causes of Lysis's madness.³⁶ Here, therefore, even more than in Le Feint Astrologue, Thomas can be seen to be turning a contemporary fashion to his own advantage, as he was to do with La Devineresse, exploiting the interest aroused by Tristan's play to attract audiences to his own. Again, however, Thomas was not being entirely original in this, since he was in many ways simply following the pattern of his original. Also, like Le Feint Astrologue, Le Berger extravagant is implicitly rather than overtly didactic, with Thomas merely exploiting his subject for comic effect. There is no mention of any potentially serious consequences of Lysis's madness, and it is

³⁴ Gossip, 'Chronologie', p. 671.

³⁵ Lancaster, History, III, 47.

³⁶ Thomas Corneille, Le Berger extravagant, pastorale burlesque, edited by Francis Bar (Paris, 1960), (I,3).

significant that he is not disabused of his folly at the end of the play as the characters are at the end of La Devineresse. On the contrary, he is persuaded that he is a tree and is contentedly transplanted into Angélique's garden.

Another aspect of Le Berger extravagant which anticipates much of Thomas's later work is that of the play within a play. Lysis has created an artificial world for himself, and the other characters assume rôles in this world in order to have fun at his expense. These assumed rôles are not, however, maintained continuously. Characters have to discipline themselves so as to avoid letting their masks slip (for example, Angélique warns Charite (III,3): 'Vous gâterez la pièce à rire davantage'), and in what are almost back-stage scenes, they comment on the progress of the action. Their assumed rôles are not only employed to mock the madness of Lysis, but also to facilitate their own courtships, as when Charite says that she would reject her suitor Clarimond but accept Philiris, the shepherd he is playing (IV, 4).

Several of Thomas's works for the Guénégaud involve the presentation of several different layers of reality or plays within plays. These were not all among those we have classified as machine plays. Le Comédien poète for example, written in collaboration with Montfleury, includes, as we have seen, a Prologue featuring an author, an actor and a décorateur. This is followed by the rehearsal of the first act of the author's play, which itself includes a play within a play in which the hero takes advantage of his father's absence to organise a private theatrical performance. The father arrives home unexpectedly, and the hero uses his actors to convince his father that the house is possessed by demons. There follows a 'Suite du Prologue' during which an actor refuses to continue performing the author's work,

insisting the company perform his own instead, and it is this second play within a play which forms the final four acts of Le Comédien poète.

As for those works which we have categorized as machine plays, La Devineresse also presents a series of what could be described as plays within the main play, as Mme Jobin uses her theatrical skills to convince her clients of the power of her magic arts. Le Triomphe des dames and L'Inconnu both present a series of sumptuous divertissements designed to delight the characters as well as the audience. In the former work these, too, spring from an obsession, in this case that of the Baron who is 'entêté de chevalerie', as a result of reading Ariosto and Amadis,³⁷ and who attempts to recreate various 'spectacles de l'antiquité'. These include entertainments for the Baron and his family, concluding with a tournament in which certain of the characters take part. L'Inconnu has the same basic structure, but is more reminiscent of Le Berger extravagant in that the characters in the main plot assume fictional rôles. A Countess is being courted by a Marquis and the 'Inconnu' of the title, who lays on a series of lavish entertainments in order to woo her. Inevitably, the Marquis and the 'Inconnu' turn out to be one and the same, and it is revealed to be his valet, La Montagne, who has been acting as metteur en scène and occasional actor. One of the entertainments in L'Inconnu, as we have seen, takes the form of a play within a play performed on a small theatre which rolls out from the rear of the main stage, and at which the Countess and her friends are spectators (V, 5-7). Perhaps the later work with which Le Berger extravagant has most in common, however, is La Pierre philosphale. Here, a Chevalier and a Marquis organise an elaborate machine play in order to disabuse M. Maugis and Mme Raymond of their belief in alchemy, and with the ultimate aim of marrying their daughters.

³⁷ Lancaster, History, IV, 915.

It is in Le Berger extravagant that we find the first incidence of Thomas using a machine to spectacular effect. Lysis, disguised as a woman is about to be submitted to ordeal by fire in order to test his/her chastity, when Hircan, disguised as a magician appears in a 'char volant' to save him (III,1).

SALON SOCIETY

Although resident in Rouen, there is reason to believe that Thomas was extremely popular in the précieux Parisian salons of the age.³⁸ Reynier reports that Pierre presented his brother at the Hôtel de Rambouillet in 1647, and that subsequently, 'le jeune poète avait régulièrement fréquenté chaque fois qu'il était venu à Paris, dans les cercles de beaux esprits, ... et où il sentait bien, en habile homme qu'il était, qu'il trouverait les plus solides appuis', adding dismissively: 'Il était fait pour briller dans ces réunions, où le caractère enjoué, l'esprit ingénieux et le talent facile étaient estimés autant que le génie' (p. 10). That Thomas and Pierre were appreciated in these circles is indicated by Somaize, who writes of the Comtesse de Noailles: 'Les vers plaisent infiniment à Noziane, mais elle ne les saurait souffrir s'ils ne sont tout à fait beaux, et c'est par cette raison qu'elle protège les deux Cléocrite <Corneille>, qui ne font rien que d'achevé, et qui, dans la composition des jeux de cirque, surpassent tous les auteurs qui ont jamais écrit'.³⁹ Thomas's Bérénice of 1658 is

³⁸ Pierre and Thomas and their families left Rouen to take up residence in Paris in 1662 (Reynier, Thomas Corneille, p. 31).

³⁹ Antoine Baudeau de Somaize, Le Dictionnaire des précieuses, edited by Charles Livet, 2 vols (Paris, 1856), I, 290, in Reynier, Thomas Corneille, p. 12.

dedicated to the Comtesse de Noailles,⁴⁰ and his Les Illustres ennemis of 1655 to the Comtesse de Fiesque.⁴¹

The latter work, which may have been the first play given by Thomas to be performed at the Marais theatre, was adapted from Rojas Zorrilla's Obligados y ofendidos with additions from Calderón's Amar después de la muerte and the same author's El pintor de su deshonra.⁴²

In taking Rojas Zorrilla's work as his main source, Thomas was following in the very recent footsteps of both Scarron and Boisrobert, who in 1654, had each produced a version of the same play. Reynier expresses the opinion that this was accidental on Thomas's part, if not on that of Boisrobert, and interprets certain comments made in the Epître to Les Engagements du hasard produced at about this time as an affirmation in this matter (p. 10). Thomas writes:

... vous connaissez jusqu'au fond de mon âme, et vous pouvez répondre pour moi, que quand je n'estimerais pas tous ceux qui écrivent aujourd'hui pour la scène au point que je les estime, je suis trop persuadé qu'il n'est pas tout-à-fait beau de marcher sur les pas d'autrui, pour avoir jamais la pensée de m'engager à un dessein où j'aurais été prévenu.

And, when in 1678, Thomas's Le Comte d'Essex was performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in January, only to be followed a month later by a play on the same subject by Boyer at the Guénégaud, it was Boyer who imitated Thomas rather than vice versa.⁴³ Nevertheless, Reynier does see criticism of Thomas in Scarron's dédicace to L'Ecolier de Salamanque, where he says of certain 'belles dames' that, 'elles ont tenu ruelle

⁴⁰ Gossip, 'Chronologie', p. 678.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 672.

⁴² Cox, 'Comedies', pp. 273-5.

⁴³ Lancaster, History, IV, 152.

pour étouffer, dès sa naissance, ma pauvre comédie'. It is Reynier's belief that this was done in favour of Thomas Corneille (p. 11).

'TIMOCRATE'

The influence of the précieuses has been seen above all in what was Thomas's most successful play, and possibly the most successful play of the entire seventeenth century, Timocrate. With this work, given its première at the Marais in 1656,⁴⁴ Thomas for the first time abandoned comedy and turned to tragedy. Critics have ascribed the change of genre, the choice of subject for Timocrate and its treatment, all to the influence of the salons. Timocrate is based on an episode from La Calprenède's Cléopâtre. Both Reynier and Yves Giraud in his edition of the work, suggest that this may have been suggested to Thomas during a 'conversation de salon'.⁴⁵ In this, too, Thomas has been accused of opportunism, just as he has in relation to La Devineresse. For example, Giraud writes:

Thomas Corneille a su prendre le vent: protégé par les Précieuses, il cherche à gagner le public féminin dont il devine l'importance croissante; il pressent que ce qui doit réussir au théâtre sera une transposition de roman. On y retrouvera l'intrigue complexe aux rebondissements nombreux, les situations paradoxales, les caractères superficiels et clinquants, les développements oratoires où l'on augmente sans fin selon la dialectique amoureuse. (pp. 9-10)

As on so many other occasions, Thomas's very success is being held against him.

Successful Timocrate certainly was, for, according to the abbé Desfontaines, the play was performed eighty times in succession.⁴⁶ This

⁴⁴ Gossip, 'Chronologie', p. 676.

⁴⁵ Thomas Corneille, p. 15; Thomas Corneille, Timocrate, tragédie, edited by Yves Giraud (Geneva and Paris, 1970), p. 11.

⁴⁶ Paradoxes littéraires (Paris, 1723), pp. 184-5

can be compared with the highest uninterrupted run at the Guénégaud of forty-seven performances for La Devineresse, and an interrupted run of seventy-six for Circé. De Visé and De Boze say more vaguely that it was performed 'un hiver entier' and 'pendant six mois' respectively.⁴⁷ Gossip has proved that if the première was given in November, as seems likely, and performances continued up until the closure of the Marais at Easter 1657, it is possible for Timocrate to have been given eighty times at the usual rhythm of three performances a week.⁴⁸ De Pure in La Précieuse records that he was twice taken to see Timocrate, and that on both occasions there were members of the royal family present:

La première fois j'y vis MONSIEUR, et la plus grand <sic> part des Princes de notre Cour. La seconde fois le Roi même en avait voulu prendre le plaisir, et il en sortit si satisfait, qu'outre la libéralité qu'il fit aux comédiens, il voulut même témoigner sa joie à Monsieur de Corneille le jeune, qui en est l'auteur, et lui dit fort obligeamment qu'il devait être bien glorieux d'avoir fait un si bel ouvrage.⁴⁹

The latter visit is described by Loret in La Muse historique of 16 December 1656, where he specifies that the King gave the actors 'six-vingts pistoles'.⁵⁰ He further describes on 20 January 1657, how Monsieur organized a private performance for his brother the King, the queen Mother and Mazarin (p. 292).

Timocrate was published in 1658 and dedicated to the Duc de Guise, whom Thomas thanks for, 'l'honneur que je reçus dans le commandement que vous me fîtes de vous faire la lecture de cet ouvrage longtemps avant

⁴⁷ Mercure galant (January 1710), p. 274.

⁴⁸ Gossip, 'Chronologie', pp. 675-6.

⁴⁹ Michel De Pure, La Précieuse ou le Mystère des ruelles, edited by Emile Magne (Paris, 1938), 2 vols, II, 176-7.

⁵⁰ Jean Loret, La Muse historique, edited by Jules-Amédée-Désiré Ravenel, Ed. V. de la Pelouze and Charles-Louis Livet, 5 vols (Paris, 1857-91), II, 276.

qu'il fut représenté', and whom he praises for having guessed the secret of the dual identity of the hero Cléomène.⁵¹ With the modesty for which he was renowned,⁵² Thomas says little in his prefatory material of the success Timocrate enjoyed on the stage. In the dedication, he refers to 'les témoignages publics que toute la Cour et tout Paris semblent avoir rendus à son avantage' (p. 53), and in his Au lecteur, he adds that 'il a eu tant de bonheur au théâtre' (p. 57). In fact, the outstanding success enjoyed by Timocrate is illustrated by two anecdotes. The first is recounted by De Visé in his obituary of Thomas Corneille:

Comme la troupe du Marais ne passait pas pour être la meilleure de Paris, et que celle de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne la surpassait infiniment et qu'elle avait toutes les voix, cette troupe entreprit de jouer cette pièce, à cause de la réputation extraordinaire qu'elle avait eue; mais, comme tout Paris le savait par coeur, cette troupe n'eut pas tous les applaudissements qu'elle attendait et le grand nombre des représentations qu'en avaient données les comédiens du Marais avait fait qu'ils possédaient si bien cette pièce, qu'il fut impossible aux copies d'atteindre jusqu'à la perfection des originaux; de manière que, lorsqu'il était question de la voir représenter, on préférait les comédiens du Marais à ceux de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne.⁵³

The second is related by the abbé Desfontaines, who tells how the actors of the Marais company were so tired of constantly being asked to perform Timocrate that finally one of them stepped forward and addressed the audience thus: 'Messieurs, vous ne vous lassez point d'entendre Timocrate; pour nous, nous sommes las de le jouer. Nous courons risque d'oublier nos autres pièces, trouvez bon que nous ne le représentions plus'.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Timocrate, ed. Giraud, p. 54.

⁵² See Antoine Baudeau de Somaize, La Pompe funèbre de Monsieur Scarron (Paris, 1660), p. 18.

⁵³ Mercure galant (January 1710), p. 276.

⁵⁴ Paradoxes littéraires, pp. 184-5.

MOLIERE'S TROUPE IN ROUEN

Two years later, in 1658, there occurred an episode of great significance when considered in the light of Thomas's subsequent career. In the late spring of that year, Molière brought his troupe to perform in Rouen, where they remained for over five months.⁵⁵ From the 'Abrégé de la vie de Molière' published in the 1682 edition of his works, we learn that the latter 'avait passé le carnaval à Grenoble d'où il partit après Pâques, et vint s'établir à Rouen'.⁵⁶ Since Easter Sunday fell that year on 21 April, the company must have arrived in Rouen in early May 1658.⁵⁷ This is confirmed by a letter from Thomas to De Pure dated 19 May 1658, implying that the greater part of the troupe had already arrived, but stating that they were still awaiting the arrival of 'deux beautés'. These have been identified by Bouquet as Mlles Du Parc and De Brie (p. 22). Of the members already in situ, Thomas writes: 'Au moins ai-je remarqué en Mademoiselle REJAC grande envie de jouer à Paris; et je ne doute point qu'au sortir d'ici cette troupe n'y aille passer le reste de l'année'. Bouquet believes this to refer to Madeleine Béjart (p. 18), who was, in fact, so eager to perform in Paris that she took out a lease on the Marais theatre on 12 July 1658, although this was never taken up.⁵⁸ Indeed, the move to Rouen was, apparently, a deliberate stage in Molière's plan to return to Paris after thirteen years in the provinces, as his biographer recounts: 'En 1658 ses amis lui conseillèrent de s'approcher de Paris en faisant venir sa troupe dans une ville voisine, c'était le moyen de profiter du crédit que son

⁵⁵ François-Valentin Bouquet, 'La Troupe de Molière et les deux Corneille à Rouen en 1658' (Rouen, 1865), p. 11.

⁵⁶ Molière, Oeuvres complètes, I, 997.

⁵⁷ Bouquet, 'Troupe de Molière', pp. 13-4.

⁵⁸ Molière, Oeuvres complètes, I, xlv.

mérite lui avait acquis auprès de plusieurs personnes de considération, qui, s'intéressant à sa gloire, lui avaient promis de l'introduire à la Cour.⁵⁹

Bouquet assumes that Molière's troupe in Rouen must have consisted of the same actors who were present in the company during its first season in Paris. These were: Molière himself, Madeleine and Geneviève Béjart, Joseph and Louis Béjart, De Brie and his wife, Du Parc and his wife, Charles Dufresne and a gagiste, Croisac. He also suggests that Armande Béjart, later Mlle Molière, may already have been appearing with the company, acting under the pseudonym of Mlle Menou (pp. 24-5), since someone of that name had appeared as Ephyre in Pierre Corneille's Andromède, performed by the company in Lyons in 1653 (p. 38). According to Soleirol, Du Croisy's troupe was also present in Rouen at this time, and there may have occurred a temporary fusion of the two companies.⁶⁰ There is, however, no evidence to support such a theory, although Du Croisy did go on to become a member of Molière's troupe and the Guénégaud company.

Evidence is scarce as to the repertory of Molière and his troupe in Rouen. We can, however, attempt to establish this by looking at those plays performed during the company's first years in Paris. At the Guénégaud, as we have seen, it was usual for just three or four new works to be performed each season, and this pattern had also been that of Molière's troupe.⁶¹ But in the first five seasons after their installation in the capital, they are recorded as having performed

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 997.

⁶⁰ H. A. Soleirol, Molière et sa troupe (Paris, 1858), p. 87.

⁶¹ In only three seasons were more new works performed: five in 1660-1; five in 1663-4; and six in 1667-8, including the single performance of Tartuffe given prior to its banning on 6 August 1677 (La Grange, Registre, I, 91).

fifty-four plays: thirteen premières, a reworking by Madeleine Béjart of D. Guichot ou les Enchantements de Merlin,⁶² and forty revivals. It would seem safe to assume, therefore, that a considerable number of these revivals had previously formed part of the repertory of Molière's troupe in the provinces.⁶³ They included nine plays by Pierre Corneille: Nicomède, Héraclius, Rodogune, Cinna, Le Menteur, La Mort de Pompée, Le Cid, Horace and Sertorius; and two by Thomas: Dom Bertrand de Cigarral and Le Géôlier de soi-même. Bouquet suggests that Molière's troupe may also have presented Pierre Corneille's Andromède in Rouen, since this work had previously been performed by them in Lyon in 1653 (pp. 37-8).

We have already seen that there may have been some contact between Molière and Pierre Corneille during the former's visit to Rouen in 1643. Given the large proportion of plays by Pierre in the repertory of Molière's troupe, Bouquet expresses the view that in 1658, this may have developed into a collaboration, particularly during the rehearsal period. He adds that Pierre, renowned for his bad diction, can have been of little practical help, but that Thomas who 'excellait à bien lire et à bien dire', would have been admirably suited to this type of work (p. 56). That such a collaboration between a playwright and the troupe presenting his work was by no means unusual we have already seen when considering production at the Guénégaud. Georges Couton suggests that Molière 'avait voulu se faire l'interprète de Corneille, voire s'imposer à Corneille comme son interprète',⁶⁴ but that the style of acting he preferred was not to the liking of the dramatist. Couton cites in evidence the first scene of L'Impromptu de Versailles in which there

⁶² Ibid., p. 14.

⁶³ Two plays by Molière are specifically described by La Grange as having been given their first performance in the provinces: L'Etourdi and Le Dépit amoureux.

⁶⁴ Molière, Oeuvres complètes, I, xxvii.

occurs a conversation between a troupe leader and an author, with the former advocating a more natural and the latter a more artificial acting style, adding: 'Nous verrions volontiers dans cette scène une synthèse des conversations rouennaises entre Pierre Corneille et Molière, à propos d'un art que chacun entendait à sa manière: la traduction même d'un malentendu profond' (pp. xxvi-xxvii).

Nevertheless, Thomas at least appears to have been initially satisfied with what he saw. He wrote to De Pure in a letter dated 19 May 1658 about Molière's troupe and the Marais company, which was then enduring a period of decline: 'Je voudrais qu'elle voulût faire alliance avec le Marais: elle en pourrait changer la destinée. Je ne sais si le temps pourra faire ce miracle'.⁶⁵ This was precisely what was to come about in 1673, and Thomas was to play a crucial rôle in the fortunes of the united troupes. The Marais theatre was, in fact, closed in spring 1658, while some of the members of its company were touring in the provinces.⁶⁶ One can understand that Thomas should have been concerned to see the resurrection of a theatre where he had enjoyed many successes, including that of Timocrate.

The two looked for actresses arrived in Rouen towards the end of May. One of them, Mlle Du Parc, was a great beauty, reputedly once loved by Molière and later to become the mistress of Racine.⁶⁷ Nor were the two Corneille brothers immune to her charms. Pierre addressed a series of poems to the actress, describing a conventional and courtly love, seasoned with a curious mixture of self-deprecation and vanity. He wrote:

⁶⁵ Mélèse, Théâtre et public, p. 29.

⁶⁶ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, II, 89-98.

⁶⁷ André Chagny, Marquise Du Parc: créatrice du rôle d'Andromaque (Paris, 1961), pp. 38-55.

Vos beaux yeux sur ma franchise
 N'adressent pas bien leurs coups,
 Tête chauve et barbe grise
 Ne sont pas viande pour vous;
 Quand j'aurai l'heur de vous plaire,
 Ce serait perdre du temps
 Iris, que pourriez-vous faire
 D'un galant de cinquante ans?⁶⁸

And, elsewhere:

Marquise, si mon visage
 A quelques traits un peu vieux,
 Souvenez-vous qu'à mon âge
 Vous ne vaudrez guère mieux.

 Pensez-y, belle Marquise.
 Quoiqu'un grison fasse effroi,
 Il vaut bien qu'on le courtise,
 Quand il est fait comme moi.⁶⁹

One of these poems, 'Madrigal pour une dame qui représentait la Nuit en la comédie d'Endymion', provides us with one of the few pieces of evidence as to the composition of the repertory of Molière and his troupe in Rouen. The work in question is Gabriel Gilbert's Les Amours de Diane et d'Endymion, performed by Molière's troupe in Paris in 1660-1. The circumstances surrounding the composition of another poem clearly illustrate the intimacy that existed between Pierre and Thomas and members of Molière's company. This is the 'Sonnet perdu au jeu', sent to De Pure by Pierre on 9 July 1658, with the following accompanying letter: 'Je vous envoie un méchant sonnet que je perdis hier au jeu contre une femme dont le visage et la voix valent bien quelque chose. C'est une bagatelle que j'ai brouillée ce matin. Vous en aurez la première copie'.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Oeuvres complètes, ed. Stegmann, p. 882.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Bouquet, Troupe de Molière, p. 59.

Pierre's work has also been interpreted as suggesting that there may have existed a rivalry between himself and his brother for the lady's affections:

Renvoyez mes soupirs qui volent après vous;
Faites-moi présumer qu'il en est quelques autres
A qui, jusqu'en ces lieux, vous renvoyez des vôtres,
Qu'en faveur d'un rival vous allez me trahir:
J'en ai vous savez, que je ne puis haïr.⁷¹

Thomas himself addressed a poem to the actress in which, in Reynier's words, 'il analysait sa passion avec une subtilité qui aurait fait pâmer d'admiration toute une ruelle de précieuses' (p. 21). There is, however, no reason to suppose that this was anything more than the type of gallant declaration so popular in those circles, as Thomas himself makes clear:

Je ne vous demande point qu'à mes vœux favorable
Vous vous montriez amante en vous montrant aimable,
Et que, par un transport qui n'examine rien,
Le don de votre coeur suive l'offre du mien.⁷²

While his company was resident in Rouen, Molière made several trips to Paris to arrange their transfer there. Finally, according to his biographer, 'après quelques voyages qu'il fit à Paris secrètement, il eut l'avantage de faire agréer ses services et ceux de ses camarades à Monsieur, frère unique de Sa Majesté, qui, lui ayant accordé sa protection et le titre de sa troupe, le présenta en cette qualité au Roi et à la Reine Mère'.⁷³ The rest of the company left Rouen immediately, and they made their Parisian début before the King in the Salle des

⁷¹ Oeuvres complètes, ed. Stegmann, p. 881.

⁷² In Reynier, Thomas Corneille, p. 22.

⁷³ Molière, Oeuvres complètes, I, 997.

Gardes of the Louvre on 24 October 1658, performing Pierre Corneille's Nicomède and Le Docteur amoureux.⁷⁴

RELATIONS WITH MOLIERE

We have already seen that Thomas's initial reaction to Molière's troupe was favourable. It is curious, therefore, that we find him in a letter dated 4 April 1659, writing to De Pure: 'J'apprends que les trois troupes se maintiennent à Paris. Je ne sais ce qui arrivera des deux faibles'.⁷⁵ These can only have been those of the Marais, now reopened, and of Molière. Later that same year, Thomas was still more scathing as to the abilities of Molière's troupe, then performing at the Petit-Bourbon, writing to De Pure of the production of his friend Coqueteau de la Clairière's tragedy Pylade et Oreste in a letter dated 1 December 1659:

J'ai eu bien de la joie de ce que vous m'avez écrit d'Oreste et de Pylade, et suis fâché en même temps que la haute opinion que M. de la Clairière avait du jeu de MM. de Bourbon n'ait pas été remplie avantageusement pour lui, tout le monde dit qu'ils ont joué détestablement sa pièce, et le grand monde qu'ils ont eu à leur farce des précieuses fait bien connaître qu'ils ne sont propres qu'à soutenir de pareilles bagatelles, et que la plus forte pièce périrait entre leurs mains.⁷⁶

Is it possible to see here evidence of a rupture between Molière and the Corneille brothers? Reynier clearly believes so, asking of the former: 'Pourquoi, à partir de 1662, cessa-t-il de jouer les ouvrages des deux Corneille?' (p. 23). And it is true that after the five performances of Le Géôlier de soi-même given in 1662-3, works by Thomas Corneille completely disappear from the repertory of Molière's troupe.

⁷⁴ La Grange, Registre, I, 1.

⁷⁵ Gossip, 'Composition', p. 474.

⁷⁶ Mélése, Théâtre et public, p. 199.

The same cannot be said of those of Pierre. For only one season (1669-70) during the whole period of its activity in Paris did Molière's troupe not have one of his plays in its repertory; they gave the premières of Attila and Tite et Bérénice, and the two men collaborated on Psyché. Indeed, Couton refers to Molière's 'obstination' to perform Corneille as being 'digne d'un meilleur succès'. It would seem, therefore, that if any animosity existed, it was between Molière and Thomas alone, and did not include Pierre.

That there was animosity on both sides has been seen to be indicated by the fact that certain lines in Molière's L'Ecole des femmes could be taken as referring specifically and insultingly to Thomas Corneille:

Je sais un paysan qu'on appelait Gros-Pierre,
Qui n'ayant pour tout bien qu'un quartier de terre,
Y fit tout à l'entour faire un fossé bourbeux,
Et de Monsieur de l'Isle en prit le nom pompeux. (I,1)

Monsieur de l'Isle was the name Thomas used to distinguish himself from his brother. This was so well known that in Le Panégyrique de l'Ecole des femmes he is referred to as Isole,⁷⁷ and the allusion was further picked up and used against Pierre by D'Aubignac in his Quatrième Dissertation, when accusing Pierre of having organised a cabal to bring about the failure of L'Ecole des femmes,⁷⁸ a cabal in which it has been suggested that Thomas may also have played a part.⁷⁹ It is also possible that Molière may have had Thomas in mind when creating the rôle of Lysidas in La Critique de l'Ecole des femmes, whom Couton describes as:

⁷⁷ Molière, Oeuvres complètes, I, 1270, n. 3.

⁷⁸ François Hédelin, abbé d'Aubignac, Quatrième Dissertation servant de réponse aux calomnies de M. Corneille (Paris, 1663), p. 115.

⁷⁹ Reynier, Thomas Corneille, pp. 24-5.

Savourant la louange et avide d'argent, très soucieux de sa publicité, habile à lancer sa pièce nouvelle et à composer la salle; bénin et circonspect quand il s'agit de s'exprimer sur un confrère; mais, une fois échauffé, dressant un requisitoire tatillon, impitoyable et pédant. Il constate avec une douleur patriotique la déchéance du théâtre, le vide 'effroyable' aux 'grands ouvrages', l'engouement pour des 'bagatelles' et des 'sottises'.⁸⁰

Couton makes out a persuasive case to identify Lysidas with Thomas Corneille, the most convincing detail of which is the character's use of the word 'bagatelles'. This was precisely the term employed by Thomas to describe Molière's work in his letter to De Pure of 1 December 1659, and as Couton points out: 'De Pure n'a sûrement pas gardé pour lui cette lettre: une correspondance était alors collective, et non privée. Le mot 'bagatelle' a dû courir: il est de ceux que le genus irritabile vatum peut à la rigueur pardonner, mais pas oublier'.⁸¹

As far as a professional rivalry between the two authors is concerned, one can hardly be said to have existed, since from 1658, when Molière returned to Paris, to his death in 1673, Thomas produced only three comedies, as opposed to eleven tragedies. It has been suggested that Thomas concentrated on tragedy in this period because he was afraid of entering into competition with Molière,⁸² but as we have seen, this move away from comedy had been made as early as 1656 with Timocrate. It is, however, possible that there may already have been bitterness and resentment on Molière's side which was only exacerbated by Thomas's disparaging comments. Molière saw Thomas, whom he may have considered an inferior talent, succeeding in a realm that was widely considered to be superior to his own, while at the same time belittling his own artistic

⁸⁰ Molière, Oeuvres complètes, I, 1287-9.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² See, for example, Jules Lemaître, Théories et impressions (Paris, 1904), p. 189.

achievements. This feeling would, no doubt, have been all the more acute after the failure of Molière's comédie-héroïque, Dom Garcie de Navarre in February 1661, of which Couton writes:

En tête de la hiérarchie communément admises des genres dramatiques, le XVII^e siècle mettait la tragédie.... Avec Dom Garcie de Navarre, il a tenté le genre le plus proche de ce sommet, le plus faux qui fût alors au théâtre, aussi il n'est pas résigné encore à n'être pas Corneille, ou Quinault, pas encore résigné à être Molière. Il n'a pas trouvé sa voie.⁸³

It must, therefore, have been particularly galling for Molière to see Thomas succeed, especially if he, himself, secretly despised the 'bagatelles' he found himself condemned to produce. The irony is, of course, that it was partly thanks to the success of Thomas Corneille in a different genre, that of the machine play, that these same 'bagatelles' passed into the repertory of the Comédie-Française and came to be esteemed as some of the greatest works of the French national heritage. Reynier writes of Thomas Corneille:

... il n'était pas homme à s'embrigader parmi les jaloux qui menèrent contre le grand écrivain l'odieuse campagne que l'on sait. Pourrait-on raisonnablement compter parmi les ennemis de Molière l'homme de qui ses contemporains ont dit qu'il ne connut pas l'envie, que la femme de Molière devait un jour prier de mettre en vers Le Festin de pierre, et qui, après la fatale soirée du Malade imaginaire, devait être l'auteur préféré des camarades de Molière? (pp. 25-6)

The answer, of course, is yes. Indeed, the fact that Thomas had nothing to do with Molière's troupe until after the latter's death would tend to point towards the existence of bad feeling between the two men. One can only add in Thomas's defence that there appears to have been hostility on both sides.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 340.

MONTFLEURY

The 'Registres des privilèges accordés aux auteurs et libraires' preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale contain the following entry: 'Ce jourd'hui le sieur De Luynes marchand libraire nous a présenté un privilège qu'il a obtenu sous son nom pour deux livres intitulés L'Estilicon et Le Mariage de rien par le sieur de Corneille, ledit privilège en date de 3^e jour de mai 1660 pour sept années'.⁸⁴ The first of these works is easily identifiable as the tragedy Stilicon; the second play mentioned is, according to Gossip, Thomas's comedy Le Galand doublé under a different title.⁸⁵ However, as we have seen, a comedy entitled Le Mariage de rien entered the Guénégaud repertory in 1677-8, having previously formed part of that of the Hôtel de Bourgogne. The first edition of this work, published by De Luyne, gives the following details: privilège 3 May 1660, achevé 10 May 1660.⁸⁶ It would, seem therefore, that the work referred to in the 'Registres des privilèges' is that of Montfleury, and that the privilège for it was taken out by Thomas on its author's behalf. This is reminiscent of Pierre Corneille taking out privilèges for Thomas's works in the early stages of his brother's career, especially as Montfleury refers to the play in his dedication as his 'coup d'essai'. This mark of friendship is particularly interesting, given that the two authors were to go on to become the leading lights of the Guénégaud theatre, and were, indeed, to collaborate on a production there, Le Comédien poète.

⁸⁴ Gossip, 'Chronologie', p. 1040.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Antoine Montfleury, Le Mariage de rien, comédie (Paris, 1660).

HOTEL DE BOURGOGNE

It is known from Loret's Muse historique that Stilicon was first performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne (III, 162). We have already considered Thomas's letter to De Pure of 4 April 1659, in which he refers to two of the three Parisian troupes as 'faibles', and which continues: 'je vais commencer à travailler au hasard'.⁸⁷ This would seem to indicate that Thomas had hitherto been accustomed to write with a specific company in mind. From 1660 to 1673, this company was that of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, with only one of the works written by Thomas during this period being given elsewhere.⁸⁸ In fact, according to De Visé, the actors of the Hôtel de Bourgogne took great pains to attract Thomas to write for them, even to the extent of inducing actors to join them from the Marais: 'Les comédiens de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne, chagrins des avantages que recevaient les comédiens du Marais, mirent tout en usage pour s'acquérir M. de Corneille, et il se trouva obligé de travailler pour eux, parce qu'ils avaient fait entrer dans leur troupe quelques comédiens du Marais, sans lesquels ses pièces auraient été mal jouées'.⁸⁹ Understandably, these events were not well-viewed by the members of the Marais company, who, according to Reynier, were responsible for a cabal organised to bring about the failure of Stilicon. That such a cabal occurred, is known by a letter from Coqueteau de la Clairière to De Pure dated 13 January 1660, in which he writes: 'Nous attendons avec impatience le succès de Stilicon, la ruine des brigues que l'on avait faites pour en diminuer l'éclat et le

⁸⁷ Gossip, 'Composition', p. 474.

⁸⁸ There is, however, some doubt as to where Le Galant doublé was first performed; see Gossip, 'Composition', pp. 474-5.

⁸⁹ Mercure galant (January 1710), p. 274. According to Deierkauf-Holsboer, the actors who transferred were Hauteroche and Poisson (Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 95).

rétablissement de la chaleur des bourguignons'.⁹⁰ Coqueteau notes in the same letter that he is expecting Thomas to return to Rouen at any moment. Thomas, himself, had announced to De Pure in his letter dated 1 December 1659, his intention of travelling to Paris 'pour Stilicon'.⁹¹ Gossip concludes, no doubt rightly, that Thomas was actively involved in preparing the production of his work, as well as in trying to remedy the ill-effects of the cabal against it.⁹²

The above letter is also interesting in that it contains a reference to the future Guénégaud machiniste, the Marquis de Sourdéac. Thomas writes: 'M. de Sourdéac fait toujours travailler à la machine, et j'espère qu'elle paraîtra à Paris sur la fin de janvier'.⁹³ This almost certainly refers to the preparations for Pierre Corneilles' La Conquête de la Toison d'or, performed by the Marais company at Sourdéac's Normandy home in December 1660, before being given in Paris. Deierkauf-Holsboer, in her history of the Marais troupe, comments on the fact that this work was being publicized as early as February 1660, but was not performed until almost a year later (III, 121-35). Thomas's letter confirms that preparations were under way at the earlier date. We also see that fifteen years before the production of his first machine play, Thomas was already acquainted with the person who was to be responsible for its realization.

The Hôtel de Bourgogne's determination to secure Thomas's services would seem to prove that he was a highly popular playwright. This is further attested to by a document which appeared in the same year as

⁹⁰ In Gossip, 'Composition', p. 1042.

⁹¹ Thomas Corneille, Stilicon, tragédie, edited by Christopher J. Gossip (Geneva, 1974), p. xx.

⁹² Gossip, 'Composition', p. 1043.

⁹³ In Pierre Corneille, Oeuvres complètes, suivies des oeuvres choisies de Thomas Corneille, 2 vols (Paris, 1834), II, 751.

Stilicon. In La Pompe funèbre de Monsieur Scarron, Somaize relates a dream in which Scarron is lying ill and is attempting to choose his successor assisted by advisors from various professions. An actor proposes Quinault, to which a publisher objects that his works do not do well in book form. He proposes Thomas Corneille, 'alléguant que son Don Bertrand, son Amour à la mode, et son Jodelet prince, étaient des chefs d'oeuvre comiques'. The actor agrees that his plays are good, but adds, 'qu'elles coûtaient trop cher aux comédiens, et qu'ainsi ils le priaient de ne le point élire. Le libraire lui répliqua, qu'il gagnait plus à des ouvrages qui lui coûtaient cher et qu'il vendait bien, qu'à d'autres qui lui coûtaient peu, et qui tenaient si bien dans sa boutique, qu'ils n'en pouvaient jamais sortir' (pp. 8-10). We see, therefore, that Thomas's works were not only successful on the stage but also sold well in book form. It is a further indication of his popularity that the Hôtel de Bourgogne company were not only prepared to lure him away to work for them, but were also prepared to pay the somewhat elevated prices he demanded for his works.

'CAMMA'

By the time of the appearance of Stilicon, Thomas's ability had already been appreciated by the Surintendant des Finances, Nicholas Fouquet, who awarded him a pension.⁹⁴ Fouquet offered help of a more artistic nature to Pierre Corneille, in an attempt to persuade him to return to writing for the theatre. According to the Corneille brothers' nephew Fontenelle, he suggested three possible subjects for tragedies.⁹⁵ Two were Oedipus and Camma, of which Pierre chose the former. Gossip

⁹⁴ Gossip, 'Composition', p. 1041.

⁹⁵ Pierre Corneille, Oedipe, 'Au lecteur'; in Oeuvres complètes, ed. Stegmann, p. 566.

suggests Stilicon as the third;⁹⁶ and both Stilicon and Camma were taken as subjects by Thomas.

Thomas's tragedy Camma was first performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne on 28 January 1661, and seems to have enjoyed considerable success, as is recorded by De Visé in his obituary of Thomas:

... la Cour et la Ville se trouvèrent en si grand nombre aux représentations de cette pièce que les comédiens ne trouvaient plus de place sur le théâtre pour pouvoir jouer avec tranquillité. Il arriva une chose en ce temps-là qui n'avait point encore été faite par aucune troupe. Les comédiens, jusqu'à cette pièce, n'avaient joué la comédie que les dimanche, les mardi et les vendredi; mais ils commencèrent à cause de la foule, à jouer les jeudi, ce qui leur arriva dans la suite lorsque les pièces étaient fort suivies, ce qu'ils ont toujours fait depuis, et ce qui leur a valu beaucoup d'argent.⁹⁷

Nor was Camma merely a short-lived success. Robinet, in a letter dated Saturday 31 October 1666, reports a performance the previous Thursday at Court 'devant les Majestés',⁹⁸ and the play was still in the repertory of the Hôtel de Bourgogne between 1678 and 1680, since its scenic requirements are specified in the Michel Laurent section of the Mémoire de Mahelot (p. 114). Nevertheless, Camma was only subsequently performed twice at the Guénégaud theatre and twice at the Comédie-Française.⁹⁹

Following the disgrace of his patron Fouquet in 1661, we find an assessment of Thomas's abilities in Chapelain's Mémoire des gens de lettre vivants en 1662, drawn up to assist in the selection of writers to receive royal pensions. The appreciation is hardly flattering, for it

⁹⁶ Gossip, 'Composition', p. 1041.

⁹⁷ Mercure galant (January 1710), pp. 278-9.

⁹⁸ James de Rothschild and Emile Picot, eds., Les Continuateurs de Loret: lettres en vers de La Gravette de Mayolas, Robinet, Boursault, Perdou de Subigny et autres, 3 vols (Paris, 1881-9), II, 429-30.

⁹⁹ Lancaster, History, III, 442.

is said of Thomas that, 'à force de vouloir surpasser son aîné, <il> tombe fort au-dessous de lui et son élévation le rend obscur sans le rendre grave'.¹⁰⁰ Thomas was awarded a pension of 1,000 livres per annum notwithstanding, 'pour lui donner moyen de continuer son application aux belles lettres', as compared with Pierre's 2,000 livres, 'en considération des beaux ouvrages qu'il a donnés au théâtre français'.¹⁰¹ Thomas's pension was continued for only three years, however, from 1664 to 1666, whereas Pierre's was continued until 1674, and Reynier suggests that its abrupt cessation may have been due to Thomas's having offended Colbert in some way (p. 38).

'LE BARON D'ALBIKRAC' AND 'LA COMTESSE D'ORGUEIL'

Ironically, just over a year after the cessation of his pension, Thomas enjoyed one of his greatest successes with Le Baron d'Albikrac, performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in late 1667 or early 1668.¹⁰² This variation on the theme of the uncouth country nobleman was Thomas's first comedy since Le Galant doublé of 1660, and like so many of his early works, was based on a Spanish comedia: Moreto's De fuera vendrá quien de casa nos echará.¹⁰³ It enjoyed a degree of success which appears to quite offend Reynier: 'Le public, dont dix ouvrages de Molière n'avaient pas encore formé le goût, fit un énorme succès à cette médiocre comédie d'intrigue, qui n'avait même pas le mérite d'être originale: et ce qu'il y a de plus étonnant, c'est que le succès dura deux siècles' (p. 39). Le Baron d'Albikrac was given two private

¹⁰⁰ Jean Chapelain, Mémoire des gens de lettres vivant en 1662, in Reynier, Thomas Corneille, p. 38.

¹⁰¹ Colbert, Lettres, ed. Clément, V, 466.

¹⁰² There is some debate as to the date of this first performance; see Gossip, 'Composition', pp. 472-3.

¹⁰³ Cox, 'Comedies', pp. 286-9.

performances shortly after its creation: one at the home of Madame and the other as part of a fête at Saint-Germain-en-Laye masterminded by Vigarani.¹⁰⁴ According to Lancaster, it remained in the repertory of the Hôtel de Bourgogne until the foundation of the Comédie-Française, where it was performed 134 times between 1682 and 1779. In fact, in 1682 alone, Le Baron d'Albikrac was given seventeen performances, including one at Saint-Germain-en-Laye and one at Saint-Cloud.¹⁰⁵ Mouhy says of the play in his Journal chronologique: 'elle eut la réussite la plus soutenue et attira pendant longtemps les plus nombreuses assemblées: c'est une des pièces restées au théâtre qui l'a été reprise avec le plus de succès, et le plus souvent pendant plus de quarante ans'.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, Reynier reports that a modified version was given at the Théâtre de l'Odéon as late as 29 June 1823 (p. 39).

After the failure of a tragedy, La Mort d'Annibal, given only three performances in November 1669, Thomas appears to have attempted to rework the successful formula of Le Baron d'Albikrac. La Comtesse d'Orgueil is adapted from two Spanish comedias: Alvaro Cubillo's El señor de noches buenas and Moreto's El lindo don Diego.¹⁰⁷ Gossip is not specific as to the date of the first performance of this work, only stating that this occurred after that of La Mort d'Annibal and before that of Ariane, presumably in late 1670 or early 1671. He does point out, however, that the registration of the privilège specifies quite clearly that La Comtesse d'Orgueil was given at the Marais,¹⁰⁸ whereas

¹⁰⁴ Rothschild, ed., Continueurs, III, 392, 815.

¹⁰⁵ History, III, 801.

¹⁰⁶ Charles de Fieux de Mouhy, Journal chronologique, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds français, 9230-5, f° 1245 r°, in Gossip, 'Chronologie', p. 1045.

¹⁰⁷ Cox, 'Comedies', pp. 289-91.

¹⁰⁸ Gossip, 'Chronologie', pp. 1045-6.

all previous critics, including Deierkauf-Holsboer, had assumed that its first performance took place at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. Thus, La Comtesse d'Orgueil was the first play to be given by Thomas to the Marais company in ten years. Were the Hôtel de Bourgogne troupe, after a series of somewhat undistinguished tragedies, rather less willing to pay Thomas's asking price, especially now that the young Jean Racine had served his ^Paprenticeship and was embarked on his series of great tragedies? Or ^Lwas Thomas merely expressing solidarity with a troupe which had been so important both to himself and his brother in the past? In any event, the production of a play by Thomas at the Marais at this time, together with his ^dfriendship with Montfleury as proved by the joint ^Lprivilège for Stilicon and Le Mariage de rien, and who was to give the Marais company his L'Ambigu comique in 1673, makes Thomas's special relationship with the united troupes at the Guénégaud more understandable.

According to Reynier, La Comtesse d'Orgueil was a failure (p. 39); but in his épître Thomas speaks of 'l'approbation qu'elle a reçue au théâtre', even though he describes the work as 'une bagatelle à qui on a voulu faire grâce'. La Comtesse d'Orgueil was revived briefly at the Guénégaud, being given two performances in 1677-8. According to Lancaster, its 'considerable success' can be estimated by the fact that it was given fifty-nine times at the Comédie-Française between 1687 and 1762.¹⁰⁹

'ARIANE'

There can be no doubt about the success of Thomas's next play - Ariane, first performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne on 26 February 1672. The most persistently recurring theme in criticism of Thomas and his

¹⁰⁹ History, III, 812.

works is that he was a dedicated follower of fashion, constantly changing his style so as to give the public what they wanted.¹¹⁰ Thus his tragedies are frequently categorised as being either 'romanesque', Cornelian or Racinian in style, depending on which particular author he is deemed to have been trying to imitate. Ariane is generally considered to be the most 'Racinian' of all Thomas's works, and is the first he derived from Greek mythology. According to De Visé, it was written in forty days, and De Boze reduces this period of composition to just seventeen days.¹¹¹ De Visé refers to Ariane as Thomas's 'chef d'oeuvre', and adds that 'Jamais pièce n'a été plus touchante, et plus suivie'. The rôle of Ariane was created by Mlle Champmeslé, of whom Mlle de Sévigné wrote to her daughter:

Mais la Champmeslé est quelque chose de si extraordinaire qu'en votre vie vous n'avez rien vu de pareil. C'est la comédienne que l'on cherche et non pas la comédie; j'ai vu Ariane pour elle seule. Cette comédie est fade, les comédiens sont maudits, mais quand la Champmeslé arrive, on

¹¹⁰ For example: 'Thomas Corneille est donc oublié parce qu'il ne s'est imposé d'autre règle que les caprices de la mode, parce qu'il a été l'esclave du public au lieu d'essayer de s'en rendre le maître' (Reynier, Thomas Corneille, p. 329). Also:

Ce qui caractérise le mieux la moyenne des sentiments littéraires à chaque époque, c'est beaucoup moins le succès des hommes de génie, quand il s'en trouve, que celui des hommes de talent, plus accessibles à la foule, et qui d'ailleurs se plient à ses dispositions au lieu de lui faire violence. C'est à ces hommes de talent que sont réservés les succès brillants, incontestés, moins contestés du moins que ceux des écrivains de génie; ils n'ont pas à lutter, ce sont les favoris de la foule. Ils ont pourtant leur mérite, leur originalité même: elle consiste à exprimer, mieux que personne, les idées et les sentiments de tout le monde. Ces habiles gens se sont appelés de nos jours Scribe et Casimir Delavigne; à l'époque qui précède immédiatement l'avènement de Molière et de Racine ils s'appelaient Quinault et Thomas Corneille.

(Despois, Théâtre français, p. 373)

¹¹¹ Mercure galant (January 1710), p. 280; 'Eloge'.

entend un murmure, tout le monde est ravi et l'on pleure de son désespoir.¹¹²

When Mlle de Champmeslé transferred to the Guénégaud in 1679, Ariane was one of the plays she took with her. It was subsequently performed fourteen times at the Guénégaud, and 258 times at the Comédie-Française between 1680 and 1793, making it the eleventh most frequently performed tragedy in that period.¹¹³

COLLABORATION WITH DONNEAU DE VISE

We have already had frequent occasion to mention Jean Donneau De Visé, both as critic and supporter of Molière, founder of Le Mercure galant, provider of machine plays for the Marais and negotiator in the founding of the Guénégaud. In 1663, at the very outset of his career, at the same time as attacking Molière in his Nouvelles nouvelles, De Visé also took the opportunity to criticise Pierre Corneille's Sophonisbe which had recently been produced at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. This work was also the object of criticism from the Abbé d'Aubignac who the same year published his Remarques sur la tragédie de 'Sophonisbe' de M. Corneille. Evidently deciding that he would gain more publicity by defending Corneille than by attacking him, De Visé then, in the same way as he would for Molière, completely reversed his position to take up Corneille's defence. In his Défense de la 'Sophonisbe' de M. de Corneille, he attempts to explain his sudden about turn thus:

Vous vous étonnerez peut-être de ce qu'ayant parlé contre Sophonisbe dans mes Nouvelles nouvelles, je viens de prendre son parti; mais vous devez connaître par là que je sais me rendre à la raison; je n'avais alors été voir Sophonisbe que pour y trouver des défauts; mais l'ayant depuis été voir en disposition de l'admirer et n'ayant découvert que des

¹¹² Marie de Rabutin, Marquise de Sévigné, Correspondance, edited by Roger Duchêne, 3 vols (Paris, 1972-8), I, 469 (1 April 1672).

¹¹³ Lancaster, History, III, 602.

beautés, j'ai cru que je n'aurais pas de gloire à paraître opiniâtre, et que je me devais rendre à la raison, et à mes propres sentiments, qui exigeaient de moi cet aveu, en faveur de Monsieur de Corneille, c'est-à-dire du plus fameux des auteurs français.¹¹⁴

D'Aubignac was in no way discouraged, and his criticism of Sophonisbe was republished with the addition of further material attacking Corneille's Sertorius. In this Dissertation sur 'Sertorius', D'Aubignac took the opportunity to snipe at Thomas, whose Persée et Démétrius had failed after only a few performances at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in January 1663:¹¹⁵ 'Ce n'est pas que l'ouvrage ne soit fort bon pour lui, mais ils <les spectateurs> l'ont considéré comme un apprenti qui travaille encore sur la besogne que le maître lui taille, et qui la gâte quelquefois pour ne pas bien exécuter ce qu'on lui ordonne'.¹¹⁶ De Visé responded with a Défense du 'Sertorius', in which he took up cudgels on behalf of both Corneille brothers. D'Aubignac, feigning to see in this the work of Pierre Corneille himself, replied with his Troisième dissertation concernant le poème dramatique en forme de remarques sur la tragédie de M. Corneille intitulée 'L'Oedipe', published together with a Quatrième dissertation concernant le poème dramatique servant de réponse aux calomnies de M. Corneille, in which, besides reiterating the remarks about M. de l'Isle made in L'Ecole des femmes, he attempted to justify his presentation of Thomas as Pierre's apprentice:

... vous trouvez mauvais que j'appelle vôtre petit frère un apprenti, et n'est-ce pas le nom que tout le monde lui donne, le petit Corneille, pour le distinguer de vous qui

¹¹⁴ In Mongrédien, 'De Visé', p. 97.

¹¹⁵ Gossip, 'Chronologie', p. 1044.

¹¹⁶ Deux dissertations concernant le poème dramatique en forme de remarques sur deux tragédies de M. Corneille intitulées 'Sophonisbe' et 'Sertorius' (Paris, 1663), p. 30.

êtes le grand Corneille? Et que peut-il être autre chose qu'un apprenti de théâtre à comparaison de vous qui vous en faites le maître? Sans lui faire tort on pourrait bien compter entre vous et lui quatre ou cinq degrés de maîtrise, et tout ce qu'il peut prétendre, c'est d'être votre premier garçon et de travailler par vos ordres. Puisse le dieu des Muses vous inspirer pour les lui donner bons, qu'il les exécute mieux que par le passé, et qu'il n'apporte plus sur la scène des Camma, des Démétrius et d'autres semblables pièces qui n'ont été que des escroqueries pour nos bourgeois. (p. 115)

In January 1672, De Visé published the first volume of his Le Mercure galant, a type of popular gazette in letter form, intended to consist of snippets of news, gossip and information interspersed with poetry, short stories and other items of general interest. In Le Mercure galant, De Visé soon revealed himself to be just as much a supporter of the Corneille brothers as he had been some ten years previously. In the first issue, he wrote of Ariane:

Enfin l'Ariane de M. Corneille le jeune, qu'on attendait depuis si longtemps parut vendredi dernier. On ne peut rien voir de plus touchant et cette princesse s'exprime avec des sentiments si tendres et si nouveaux, que personne ne croit qu'on puisse mieux réussir en ce genre d'écrire; et pour tout dire enfin, les charmes de Bajazet n'ont pas empêché leurs admirateurs d'en trouver dans cette pièce, et d'y retourner plus d'une fois.¹¹⁷

Later that same year, in November 1672, Thomas Corneille's Théodat was given its first performance at the Hôtel de Bourgogne.¹¹⁸ For reasons unknown, this work appears to have attracted the same type of organized opposition as Stilicon, thereby providing De Visé with the opportunity to rally once more behind his friend:

Le Théodat de M. Corneille le jeune a été joué à l'Hôtel de Bourgogne dans le même temps que la Pulchérie. Cet ouvrage aurait eu un très grand succès, si la fortune avait été un effet du mérite; mais comme ce ne sont plus les ouvrages qui

¹¹⁷ Mercure galant (1672), pp. 187-8.

¹¹⁸ Gossip, 'Chronologie', p. 1047.

cabalent, il ne faut pas s'étonner si cette pièce, qui a eu l'approbation des meilleurs connoisseurs, n'a pas été aussi suivie que les autres du même auteur.¹¹⁹

Given his position as past collaborator with both Molière's troupe and that of the Marais, and as a personal friend of both Mlle Molière and Thomas Corneille, De Visé was ideally situated, after having negotiated to bring about the union of the two troupes at the Guénégaud, to persuade Thomas to abandon the Hôtel de Bourgogne and become one of the chief suppliers of plays to the new company.¹²⁰ The fact that Thomas had given La Comtesse de l'Orgueil to the Marais in 1670 would, however, seem to indicate that his relationship with the Hôtel de Bourgogne troupe had not been as untroubled up to this point as has hitherto been supposed.

Not content with bringing Thomas to the Guénégaud, De Visé, by his own claim in his obituary of his friend in Le Mercure galant of January 1710, also played a significant part in the composition of certain of the most successful of the latter's works presented there. Of Circé he asserted that it had been his initial idea to write a machine play and that he alone had been responsible for all the spectacular episodes:

Nous avons fait encore ensemble la superbe pièce de machines de Circé, de laquelle je n'ai fait que les divertissements. Les comédiens avaient traité du Théâtre des Opéra de feu M. le marquis de Sourdéac; et comme tous les mouvements des opéras y étaient restés, je crus qu'en se servant des mêmes mouvements qui avaient servi aux machines de ces opéra, on pourrait faire une pièce qui serait récitée, et non chantée, et nous cherchâmes un sujet favorable à mettre ces machines dans leur jour. De manière que lorsque la pièce parut elle ne ressemblait en rien aux opéra qui avaient été chantés sur le même théâtre. (pp. 284-5)

¹¹⁹ Mercure galant (June 1673), p. 70.

¹²⁰ Reynier, Thomas Corneille, p. 45.

As De Visé had already had the experience of producing such spectacular presentations for the Marais, and as Thomas had only the very limited experience of introducing machines into his works demonstrated by the single flying chariot of Le Berger extravagant and the flying demons of the first act of Le Comédien poète, it would seem highly likely that De Visé played this vital rôle in introducing him to the genre.

Of his and Thomas Corneille's respective shares in the production of L'Inconnu, De Visé wrote:

Il y avait des raisons pour donner promptement cette pièce au public; de manière que pour avancer, je fis toute la pièce en prose, et pendant que je faisais la prose du second acte, il mettait celle du premier acte en vers; et comme la prose est plus facile que les vers, j'eus le temps de faire ceux des divertissements, et surtout du dialogue de l'Amour et de l'Amitié qui n'a pas déplu au public. (pp. 283-4)

De Visé, in this article, makes no claim to have had anything to do with the composition of Le Triomphe des dames, possibly because it had been rather less successful than its fellows. This is amply compensated for by his claims concerning La Devineresse:

Les comédiens m'ayant pressé, avec de fortes instances, de mettre après la mort de Madame Voisin, tout ce qui s'était passé chez elle pendant sa vie, à l'occasion du métier dont elle s'était mêlée; je fis un grand nombre de scènes qui auraient pu fournir de la matière pour trois ou quatre pièces; mais qui ne pouvaient former un sujet, parce qu'il était trop uniforme, et qu'il ne s'agissait que de gens qui allaient demander leur bonne aventure, et faire des propositions qui la regardaient, mais toutes ces scènes ne pouvant former le noeud d'une comédie, parce que toutes ces personnes se fuyant, et évitant de se parler, il était impossible de faire une liaison de scènes, et que la pièce put avoir un noeud. Je lui <à Thomas Corneille> donnai mes scènes, et il en choisit un nombre, avec lesquelles il composa un sujet, dont le noeud parut des plus agréables, et qui a été regardé comme un chef-d'oeuvre. (pp. 281-2)

In fact, the first performance of La Devineresse was given on 19 November 1679, some months before the execution of La Voisin on 22

February 1680.¹²¹ There is, however, a reference in the Guénégaud Registres on 2 May 1679 to the payment of 17 livres 2 sols 'pour un dîner avec MM. de I. et de V.' (R VII, 10), which may well have been to put the idea of a play based on the activities of the infamous sorceress to them. Corroboration of at least one of De Visé's claims regarding his part in the composition of Circé is also found in the Guénégaud Registres, where it is recorded on 31 May 1675 that he was paid 33 livres 'pour avoir joué du théorbe à la répétition de Circé' (R III, 17).

Thomas Corneille and Donneau De Visé did not only collaborate on works for the theatre. Le Mercure galant appeared between 1672 and 1674, disappeared from 1675 to 1676, had ten issues in 1677 and only began to appear regularly at monthly intervals in 1678.¹²² Unable to cope with this increase in production, De Visé took on Thomas Corneille as his associate in 1677. Initially, the agreement between the two partners was merely verbal, but a formal contract was signed in 1681, according to which Thomas and De Visé agreed to divide 'chacun par moitié tout le profit qui pourrait revenir, soit de la vente des livres, soit des présents qui pourraient <leur> être faits en argent, meubles, bijoux ou pensions, etc'.¹²³ This would appear to give the lie to the announcement found in certain volumes of Le Mercure galant: 'On avertit qu'il ne faut donner aucun argent pour faire recevoir les mémoires qu'on souhaite de voir employé dans le Mercure'.¹²⁴ On the contrary, inducements were no doubt gratefully received where publicity was concerned. We have already considered the sums paid to De Visé during the first season of the

¹²¹ Petitfils, Affaire des poisons, p. 107.

¹²² Mongrédien, 'De Visé', p. 106.

¹²³ Reynier, Thomas Corneille, p. 77.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 79.

Guénégaud's activity, and have suggested that these could have been payments for his work as a negotiator in the founding of the theatre, or else for publicity given to the newly established theatre in Le Mercure galant.

Due to the temporary suspension in publication of the gazette, we have no account of the production of Circé, L'Inconnu and Le Triomphe des dames. Le Mercure galant did, however, publish items on two of Thomas's earlier works for the Guénégaud, Le Comédien poète and La Mort d'Achille; as well as Le Festin de pierre, La Devineresse, Le Comte d'Essex, which he gave to the Hôtel de Bourgogne; and Lully's operas Bellerophon and Psyché, for which Thomas provided the libretti.¹²⁵ Le Mercure galant in no way provided its readers with a critical guide to the entertainment available in the capital, its authors being content to describe recent events and announce forthcoming attractions. What is striking, however, is the extent to which Thomas and De Visé were prepared to exploit the possibilities provided by Le Mercure galant when it came to publicizing their own productions; the items devoted to Thomas's works being noticeably longer and more enthusiastic than those on the works of other authors. These took the form of either pre-production articles, describing the intensity with which a particular work was anticipated, possibly on the basis of a reading or a report of a rehearsal; or post-production items on the rapture with which a play had been received, reinforced by the comments of any royal spectators, or accounts of the size of the audiences it was able to attract and the length of its run. Thus, it was written in January 1677 about the production of Thomas's verse adaptation of Le Festin de pierre:

... il a été extraordinairement suivi pendant les six représentations qui en ont été données; et il aurait été

¹²⁵ On Psyché and Bellerophon, see Carlez, 'Librettistes', pp. 163-72.

sans doute fort loin, si les comédiens qui sont plus religieux qu'on ne les veut croire, n'eussent pas pris d'eux-mêmes la publication du Jubilé pour un ordre de fermer le théâtre. Le grand succès de cette pièce est un effet de la prudence de M. Corneille le jeune, qui en a fait les vers, et qui n'a mis que des scènes agréables en la place de celles qu'il a retranchées. (pp. 34-5)

The items written before and after the production of Thomas's Le Comte d'Essex, provide an admirable illustration of the type and degree of publicity that could be provided within this format. In the pre-production piece of December 1677, the recent première of Pradon's Electre at the Guénégaud is barely mentioned, while Thomas's forthcoming attraction at the Hôtel de Bourgogne is anticipated at length:

... rien n'a paru de nouveau sur le théâtre, à l'exception de l'Electre de M. Pradon, qui a été joué par la troupe du Faubourg Saint-Germain. Celle de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne promet pour le lendemain des Rois sans remise la première représentation du Comte d'Essex de M. de Corneille le jeune. Ce sujet est grand et de notre siècle, puisque sa disgrâce arriva au commencement de l'année 1601. On dit qu'il n'y a rien de plus touchant que cette pièce. Elle a fait du moins assez de bruit par quelques lectures, pour obliger l'autre troupe à promettre aussi un Comte d'Essex qu'elle lui doit opposer. S'il a autant de beautés qu'on assure qu'il y a dans celui dont je vous parle, on peut se promettre beaucoup de plaisir de cette opposition. (pp. 314-5)

Similarly, the following month, Le Mercure galant merely announced the title of the work recently given its first performance at the Guénégaud, while praising Thomas's Le Comte d'Essex, evidently in the hope of counteracting widespread adverse criticism:

Pour ce qui regarde le théâtre, la troupe de Guénégaud a joué La Dame médecin de M. de Montfleury; et celle de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne, Le Comte d'Essex, que je vous mandai la dernière fois qu'elle promettait. Je ne m'étais point trompé, en vous disant qu'il n'y avait rien de plus touchant que cette pièce. Elle a déjà coûté bien des larmes à de beaux yeux et c'est une assez forte marque de son succès. Ce n'est pas qu'elle n'ait eu la destinée de tous les ouvrages qui ont le mieux réussi. On les critique d'abord, et ceux qui mettent le bel esprit à n'approuver jamais rien, ou qui veulent que tout ce que leurs amis n'ont pas fait soit à rejeter, ne manquent pas de passer arrêt de condamnation le

premier jour. On en a usé de la même sorte à l'égard du Comte d'Essex. Une douzaine de vers qu'on a prétendu être négligés, a fait dire aux uns et aux autres qu'il serait encore plus promptement condamné en France, qu'il ne l'avait été autrefois en Angleterre. On l'a publié, on l'a écrit en province. Cependant les grandes assemblées y continuent, et il n'y a pas d'apparence qu'on les voie sitôt cesser. Leurs Altesses Royales, Monsieur et Madame, ont honoré la représentation de cette pièce de leur présence; et après les louanges publiques qu'ils lui ont données, on peut dire qu'elle n'a besoin d'aucun éloge. La gloire en est d'autant plus grande pour M. de Corneille le jeune, que ne prévenant jamais les suffrages ni par des lectures ni par des brigues, il peut s'assurer que ce qui réussit de lui mérite toujours de réussir. Il est vrai que cet ouvrage est admirablement soutenu dans la troupe qui le représente. On sait que Mlle de Champmeslé n'a jamais de rôle touchant qu'elle n'y charme, et celui du Comte d'Essex est joué d'une manière qui lui gagne tous ses auditeurs. (pp. 190-3)¹²⁶

For Psyché, a short pre-production piece appeared in March 1678, in which the author stated simply: 'J'apprends que Psyché a été mise en opéra, et que M. Lully nous le doit donner incontinent après Pâques, avec tous ces beaux airs qui entraient dans la pièce quand la troupe de feu Molière la représenta devant le Roi' (pp. 198-9). This was followed in April by a longer compte rendu:

Psyché dont je vous parlai la dernière fois, a été représentée par l'Académie Royale de Musique. Elle a la même destinée de tout ce qu'on a vu de ce genre. On y court en foule, et le merveilleux talent de M. Lully ne paraît pas moins dans cet opéra que dans tous ceux que nous avons admirés de lui. Ce qu'il y a de surprenant c'est que les vers ont été faits et mis en musique en trois semaines. Cependant la musique ni les vers n'ont rien qui donne lieu de s'apercevoir de cette précipitation de travail; et la beauté de la symphonie et des airs qui entrent dans cet ouvrage, fait connaître plus que jamais que M. Lully ne peut rien produire que de parfait. (pp. 380-2)

¹²⁶ Ironically, Le Mercure galant of the previous month had referred specifically to the good report arising from readings of Thomas Corneille's Le Comte d'Essex. It is supposed that the part of Essex was played by Baron (Lancaster, History, IV, 148).

The pre-production piece which appeared in December 1678 for Thomas's second opera, Bellérophon, was rather more elaborate than that for Psyché:

Sans la maladie de M. de Lully qui a reculé l'opéra nouveau qu'il nous doit donner cet hiver, il aurait bientôt son tour, et je ne doute point qu'on n'eût peine à trouver place dans la salle du Palais Royal. Les triomphes de Bellérophon en font le sujet. La victoire qu'il remporta sur la Chimère, composée de trois monstres différents est une de ces surprenantes actions qui n'appartient qu'aux plus grands héros. Nous aurons la représentation de cet opéra que dans les derniers jours du mois prochain. Quelques personnes qui en ont entendu répéter les premiers actes, m'ont parlé si avantageusement de la musique, que je ne doute point qu'elle ne soit le chef d'oeuvre de M. de Lully. Ils sont et bons connoisseurs et dignes de foi; et quand ils louent quelque ouvrage on peut dire qu'il mérite d'être loué. (pp. 124-5)

A brief account of the first performance of Bellérophon was given in Le Mercure galant of January 1679, claiming typically 'que tout Paris y était, et que jamais assemblée ne fût ni plus nombreuse, ni plus illustre', that, 'j'entendis crier miracle de tous côtés', and that 'chacun convient que M. de Lully s'est surpassé lui-même, et que ce dernier ouvrage est son chef d'oeuvre' (p. 332). This was followed by a more detailed compte rendu in March:

J'allai voir la trentième représentation du nouvel opéra de Bellérophon le dimanche 19 de ce mois, et le plaisir que j'y reçus m'empêcha d'être surpris du grand monde que j'y trouvai.... Ce que je remarquai qui plaisait particulièrement dans cet ouvrage, c'est d'y voir l'action suivie partout en sorte qu'il n'y a aucune scène qui n'ait de l'enchaînement avec celle qui l'a précédée, ce qui n'y laisse aucun endroit languissant. Quand on observe cette conduite dans un opéra; que les divertissements qu'on y fait entrer naissent de la pièce même, et font une partie de l'action (ce que nous voyons rarement), que la musique est d'un aussi grand homme que M. de Lully, et qu'on n'épargne rien pour le reste, il est impossible que cet opéra manque de succès; et c'est par cette raison que celui de Bellérophon a été au-delà de tout ce qu'on a vu jusqu'ici de cette nature. Je vous dis vrai en vous mandant la dernière fois que Monseigneur le Dauphin qui l'avait vu le jour de sa mascarade chez M. le Prince de Strasbourg, en était sorti très-satisfait. On n'en peut douter, puisqu'il l'a voulu revoir depuis trois semaines. Il en parla encore plus

avantageusement qu'il n'avait fait la première fois. Les dames qui étaient avec lui n'en furent pas moins contentes, et cette représentation leur fut un fort agréable divertissement. (pp. 184-8)

It was for La Devineresse, however, that the two authors exploited the publicity provided by Le Mercure galant to its best advantage. In August 1679, following a story recounting a visit to a fake sorceress, they declared ingenuously:

La Troupe du Roi, appelé^e du Guénégaud, annonce une comédie nouvelle sous le titre de La Devineresse, ou les faux enchantements. Je ne sais pas bien encore ce que c'est; mais de la manière qu'on m'en a parlé, les spectacles de cette pièce approchent fort des choses que je vous viens de conter. Si cela est, il vaudra bien les machines ordinaires. Il aura du moins une nouveauté qu'elles ne peuvent plus avoir. Nous en saurons davantage avec le temps. (pp. 51-2)

Advance publicity appeared again in October 1679: 'La même troupe <de Guénégaud> doit faire paraître ensuite la nouvelle pièce qu'elle promet depuis quelque temps intitulée La Devineresse. On l'attend avec d'autant plus d'impatience que ce titre excite la curiosité de tout le monde, et que le Théâtre Français imite parfaitement la nature' (pp. 352-3).

A compte rendu was given the following month:

Enfin, Madame, La Devineresse promise depuis si longtemps par la Troupe du Faubourg Saint-Germain, a été représentée. Les désintéressés ont trouvé dans cette pièce tout ce que le titre leur en promettait et ils ne se sont pas seulement divertis aux scènes plaisantes dont elle est remplie, mais ils ont dit hautement que la représentation n'en pouvait être que fort utile puisqu'elle détrompe les faibles, en leur faisant voir que toutes les personnes qui se mêlent de deviner, ne savent rien. Tous les tours d'adresse qu'ont accoutumé de faire ces sortes de gens, ou par un miroir, ou par un verre plein d'eau, sont des incidents de la comédie, aussi bien qu'un corps coupé par morceaux, et une apparition du Diable sorti par un mur sans faire d'ouverture, qui sont des choses par lesquelles certains fourbes ont épouvanté ici bien des gens il y a quelques années.... Leurs manières de tromper sont développées ... dans la comédie qui se joue présentement, et on ne doit pas être surpris des grandes assemblées qu'elle attire, puisqu'elle est fort réjouissante d'elle-même, et

qu'elle apprend à se garantir des pièges de tous les diseurs de bonne aventure. (pp. 336-9)

Nor did the publicity cease there. In December, Le Mercure galant reminded the public that:

... la Troupe de Guénégaud continue toujours La Devineresse, quoique commencée depuis plus de six semaines. Il vous est aisé de juger par là que la foule y est toujours plus grande. On ne doit point en être surpris, tout Paris disant qu'on ne peut jouer une pièce de meilleur exemple, ni plus utile au public. Chacun se détrompe des devineresses, en y voyant ce qui est arrivé depuis plusieurs années chez ces prétendus sorciers; et c'est par cette raison que les maris y mènent leurs femmes, comme les mères y mènent leurs filles, afin qu'elles ne donnent jamais dans ces sortes de panneaux. (p. 353)

In January 1680, Thomas and De Visé took the opportunity to turn the delay in the production of Agamemnon to their advantage:

Je croyais vous apprendre le succès d'Agamemnon, affiché depuis longtemps par la Troupe du Roi, qu'on appelle de Guénégaud; mais la foule augmente de jour en jour aux représentations de La Devineresse, et non seulement elles ont continué jusqu'à la Saint Martin qu'elle a commencé de paraître sur le théâtre, mais il y a grande apparence qu'elles continueront tout le reste du Carnaval. Cet extraordinaire succès ne peut venir que de ce que tout le monde trouve à s'y divertir plus d'une fois, et vous tomberez d'accord que les choses qui nous font souhaiter de les revoir, ne peuvent être que fort agréables. (I, 304-5)

And in February, it was the visit to the theatre of Monsieur and Madame which gave rise to still more publicity:

La Devineresse continue encore à faire le divertissement de Paris. Les assemblées y sont toujours fortes, et comme on en a commencé les représentations en novembre, et qu'elles ne finiront qu'en mars, on voit ce qui n'est arrivé à aucune pièce sans machines, qui est d'être jouée pendant cinq mois différents.... Cette pièce est si naturellement représentée par la Troupe du Guénégaud, que Leurs Altesses Sérénissimes qui la virent ces derniers jours, dirent en sortant, qu'elles croyaient avoir vu une vérité au lieu d'une comédie. (pp. 344-5)

The authors add, almost as an afterthought: 'L'Hôtel de Bourgogne a joué Adraste de M. Ferrier. Il est rempli de beaux vers, et très-aisément tournés' (p. 345).

Such publicity was not merely confined to premières. In January 1679, the public was informed that:

La Troupe du Roi qui joue au Faubourg Saint-Germain, a remis pour nouveauté L'Inconnu de M. de Corneille le jeune. Cette galante pièce a des agréments si particuliers qu'on commence d'y courir en foule, comme on faisait il y a trois ans. Le cinquième acte en est changé, et a été pris d'une autre pièce du même auteur, qui n'ayant aucune part à ce changement ne doit pas répondre du manque de justesse qui s'y peut trouver. (pp. 330-1)

And, in April 1679, Le Mercure galant was able to promote no less than three of Thomas's works within a single paragraph:

L'opéra de Bellérophon a paru tout nouveau, tant les assemblées ont continué d'y être nombreuses. L'Ariane de M. Corneille le jeune n'a pas été moins suivie; et Mlle de Champmeslé, cette inimitable actrice qui a passé dans la troupe du Faubourg Saint-Germain, y a tiré plusieurs fois des larmes de la plupart de ses auditeurs. On nous y promet après Ariane, la galante comédie de L'Inconnu, du même auteur. C'est une pièce dont on n'a jamais vu finir les représentations qu'avec regret. (pp. 363-4)

It is, of course, impossible to accurately assess the part played by publicity in Le Mercure galant in the success or failure of Thomas's works, or, indeed, those of any other author. They may have been just as popular with only the traditional forms of theatre publicity and word of mouth to assist them, and it is significant in this respect that the production of two of Thomas's greatest successes, Circé and L'Inconnu, occurred while Le Mercure galant was temporarily out of operation. Nevertheless, as we have demonstrated, Thomas and De Visé used all the means at their disposal to attempt to ensure their success, quite blatantly giving greater exposure to Thomas's works at the expense of those by other authors. What is more, it might be that Thomas's plays,

reflecting contemporary reality as several of them did, would have found in the fashionable readership of Le Mercure galant an audience predisposed to appreciate their particular charm.

Thomas's relationship with De Visé did not cease upon the foundation of the Comédie-Française. At the latter theatre they gave their final machine play, La Pierre philosopale, a pronounced failure in that it was performed only twice on 23 and 25 February 1681 before being dropped from the repertory.¹²⁷ Their next collaborative effort, L'Usurier, which presented 'tous les secrets de la banque et mille choses fort ingénieusement tournées, pour et contre la noblesse qui n'est pas bien aisée, et contre les riches roturiers',¹²⁸ also produced at the Comédie-Française, aroused a certain amount of controversy, and as a result was taken off after nine performances, 13 February to 10 March 1685, and was never printed.¹²⁹ The final play they produced together was Les Dames vengées ou la dupe de soi-même, a reply to Boileau's Satire X, Sur les femmes of 1692. This work was given fifteen performances in Spring 1695.¹³⁰ Thomas also continued to contribute regularly to Le Mercure galant up until 1700.¹³¹

¹²⁷ Mélése, De Visé, p. 160.

¹²⁸ Nouvelles extraordinaires (Leyden, 6 February 1685), in Mélése, De Visé, p. 178.

¹²⁹ Lancaster, History, IV, 596.

¹³⁰ Mongrédien, 'De Visé', p. 108. There is disagreement as to whether Thomas did, in fact, contribute to this work. Lancaster concludes ^{'s collaboration} that he did not, since De Visé did not mention Thomas in Le Merure galant at either the time of the play's production or in his obituary of his friend (History, IV, 842). This is, however, in no way unusual, and I am inclined to follow Reynier (Thomas Corneille, pp. 246-61) and Mongrédien ('De Visé', pp. 109-10) in ascribing a share in the production of this work to Thomas Corneille.

¹³¹ Reynier, Thomas Corneille, p. 79.

EARLY GUENEGAUD PRODUCTIONS

The first play given by Thomas to the Guénégaud company was Le Comédien poète, written in collaboration with Montfleury. This was, in fact, the very first new work to be performed there. We have already had occasion to consider the friendship which may have existed between the two co-authors, as well as the play's unusual structure, consisting of a prologue and its suite which form the frame of the first act of one comedy, the whole being completed by another in three acts. This last has a Spanish flavour, though without being derived from a specific Spanish model. The first act, as we have seen, is a rudimentary machine play. The hero has arranged for a private theatrical performance to be held in his home during his father's absence. The latter returns home unexpectedly to find the door locked in his face. Upon his banging to be admitted, 'le théâtre s'ouvre' and 'il voit dans le fond du théâtre un enfer et quelques démons'. These seize him, 'et sont enlevés avec lui sur le cintre'.¹³² This was only the second appearance of machines on the Guénégaud stage during this second phase of its activity; the first being those employed for the prologue of Molière's Amphitryon. Lancaster suggests that in their collaboration on this work, it was Thomas who contributed the part concerned with the machines, since he was to go on to make them his speciality, and Montfleury was never to use them again.¹³³ There is, however, no evidence to support this view. What is more, Thomas had previously been a specialist in adaptations from Spanish comedias, and the spectacular elements in his own machine plays

¹³² Fournel, Petites Comédies, pp. 136-8. It is recorded in Le Mémoire de Mahelot that for performances of Le Comédien poète at the Comédie-Française: 'Le théâtre est des maisons sur le devant et un enfer dans le fonds. Pour le premier acte, une ferme, une trappe, deux démons. Une chaise.' (p. 130).

¹³³ History, IV, 418.

were, for the most part, the work of Donneau De Visé, by the latter's own claim.

Entries in the Guénégaud Registres relating to the 1673-4 production of Le Comédien poète record among the frais ordinaires, payments of 10 livres 5 sols to 'assistants et sauteurs', later rising to 12 livres 15 sols (R I, 58, 103). Entries at the time of the 1676-7 revival inform us that these were: 'quatre démons', who received a total of 2 livres 10 sols; 'sauteurs', who received 4 livres 10 sols; a lackey, who received 15 sols; 'ouvriers' who received 2 livres; plus a 'flambeau' at 10 sols and 'habits' at 3 livres, no doubt referring to the hiring of additional lighting and costumes (R IV, 23). As was the custom, costumes and footwear were provided for these assistants: 6 livres 10 sols were paid for 'les bas et les escarpins des sauteurs' on 10 November 1673, 12 livres 'pour les bas des démons' on 19 November 1673, and 6 livres 'pour les souliers à daim aux démons' on 28 November 1673 (R I, 58, 62, 66). The costumes were provided by M. Baraillon, who received 8 livres 5 sols per performance (R I, 59). As far as the identity of the assistants is concerned, for the first run of Le Comédien poète, the only name we have is that of Châteauneuf, who on 17 November 1673 received 4 livres 'pour avoir volé quatre fois' (R I, 61). The fact that this payment is entered separately would seem to indicate that Châteauneuf was a replacement rather than a regular member of the company. At the time of the 1674-5 revival, we find on 9 October 1674 the entry 'assistants et Baraillon et Alard ... 26 livres 10 sols', and payments were made to Alard again on 12 and 14 October 1674 (R II, 78-80). The name of Alard is well-known in the context of the history of the Théâtre de la foire in France. A company of acrobats directed by the Parisian Alard and a German, Maurice Vondrebeck gave two works, Les Forces de l'amour et de la magie and Circé en postures at the Foire

Saint-Germain in 1678, and also performed before the King.¹³⁴ It is, therefore, of considerable interest to find Alard's name in the Guénégaud Registres in connection with a work which precisely involved the participation of sauteurs or acrobats. The fact that Alard's name is entered along with that of Baraillon, and only appears on these three occasions, would suggest that he was involved in arranging the choreography of the stunts for the revival, although he may also have been one of the regular anonymous sauteurs. Alard's name is also found in the Guénégaud Registres in connection with the revival there of Le Malade imaginaire. On 7 December 1674, the frais extraordinaires of the play are recorded as having been increased, 'dû à l'inscription de M. Alard', and two days later, it is noted that he had been paid 5 livres 10 sols (R II, 104-5).

Le Mercure galant was unusually restrained in its review of Le Comédien poète, merely noting in its edition of 1674 that the comedy was 'fort divertissante' (p. 248). Nevertheless, the play enjoyed a significant degree of success, being given twenty-one performances during the course of its first season, eighteen of which were consecutive from 10 November to 22 December 1673, and reappearing at the Guénégaud for three or four performances in all but six of the eight seasons it was in operation.

The second première to be given by the Guénégaud company was also the work of Thomas Corneille, but this time writing alone. His tragedy La Mort d'Achille was first performed at the Guénégaud on 29 December 1673. Lancaster suggests that the great success enjoyed by Ariane had encouraged the actors of the Guénégaud company to think that they had found in Thomas an author to rival Racine, at the same time as

¹³⁴ Maurice Albert, Les Théâtres de la foire (1660-1789) (Paris, 1900), reprinted Geneva, 1969, pp. 5-7.

encouraging him to turn his hand once more to a Greek subject.¹³⁵ At first the signs would have appeared favourable, for De Visé announced in Le Mercure galant of 1674:

... on s'entretînt de La Mort d'Achilles de M. de Corneille le jeune, que la même troupe <de Guénégaud> devait bientôt représenter; et quelques gens qui s'étaient trouvés à une lecture de ce grand ouvrage, où était M. le Duc de Richelieu, dirent qu'ils n'avaient jamais rien vu de si beau que cette tragédie, et que ce Duc qui s'y connaît parfaitement, avait dit qu'elle surpassait son Ariane dont vous savez que le succès a été très grand, et même avec justice, puisque ce fameux auteur n'a point d'autres partisans que son mérite. (pp. 248-9)

The company was, however, ultimately disappointed, for La Mort d'Achilles, which Reynier describes as one of Thomas's weakest tragedies (p. 45), was given only nine performances and then dropped from the repertory.

In 1674-5, prior to the production of Circé, Thomas gave only one work to the Guénégaud company: Dom César d'Avalos, first performed on 21 December 1674. The title would appear to suggest that Thomas's career had now come full circle, for, like his very earliest productions for the theatre, Dom César d'Avalos is a comedy adapted from Spanish sources, in this case Moreto's El parecido en la corte and La ocasión hace el ladrón, and Tirso de Molina's La villana de Vallecas.¹³⁶ But as Cox notes, the freedom with which Thomas treats his models in this work contrasts strongly with his earlier practice; here it is less a question of adaptation than of suggestion (p. 291). According to Reynier, Dom César d'Avalos was 'composée en toute hâte, sur la demande des comédiens, que de graves difficultés avaient empêchés de préparer pour l'hiver un spectacle plus important' (p. 45). But as Gossip points out,

¹³⁵ History, IV, 146.

¹³⁶ Cox, 'Comedies', p. 291.

there is no evidence to support this claim.¹³⁷ The play was given fourteen consecutive performances in the season of its first appearance, and a further two the following season, before disappearing from the repertory. In relation to this production, it is interesting to note the abortive trip made to Versailles in September 1676, when the Guénégaud company were unable to give the requested performance of Dom César d'Avalos.

In 1675, therefore, when his cycle of machine plays produced for the Guénégaud began, Thomas was fifty years old and with a highly distinguished and varied theatrical career already behind him, ranging from the comic verve of Le Baron d'Albikrac to the elegiac beauty of Ariane, and including in Timocrate possibly the greatest success of the century in theatrical terms. In this career, we have also been able to discern a number of features which anticipate the direction his theatrical production was now about to take, above all his past association with Molière's troupe and his predilection for topical subjects and for reflecting the fashions of his times, in which inclination he was, no doubt, encouraged by the friend who was about to become his collaborator, Donneau De Visé.

¹³⁷ 'Chronologie', p. 1048.

CHAPTER EIGHT - CIRCE

DELIBERATION AND LITIGATION

In their accounts of the newly-opened Guénégaud theatre, both Donneau De Visé and Chappuzeau describe it as being admirably suited to the production of machine plays, the former writing that it has a stage 'sur lequel on peut faire de grandes choses', and the latter confirming that the stage is 'large et profond pour les plus grandes machines'.¹ That the Guénégaud company intended at its inception to devote a significant proportion of its activity to the production of machine plays would seem to be confirmed by the fact that they took on Sourdéac and Champeron as full-time machinistes with shares in the company, and that when they hired their theatre, they also bought outright all the machines that had already been constructed for Perrin's opera, together with the equipment necessary for their operation. It is curious, therefore, that in the first season after the Guénégaud opened its doors, no new machine play was performed there; nor was any revival given of those which had formed part of the repertory of the Marais theatre, despite the fact that the former members of that company had brought their scenery and stage-fittings with them. I have suggested that one possible reason for this failure to revive the Marais theatre's earlier successes and so capitalize on the public's 'passion du spectacle' may have been the limitation on the number of singers and musicians that could be employed on a production imposed by the ordonnance of 30 April 1673 issued in Lully's favour. The remaining members of Molière's troupe must, however, have been aware of this impediment to the presentation of spectacular productions when they took

¹ Mercure galant (1674), pp. 259-60; Théâtre français, pp. 120-1.

over the lease on the Guénégaud and associated themselves with Sourdéac and Champeron on 23 May 1673.

For their first season, the Guénégaud company were content to offer their public the limited spectacle provided by the prologue to Molière's Amphitryon, performed thirteen times, and the first act of Le Comédien poète by Montfleury and Thomas Corneille, performed twenty-one times. In 1674-5, they added to their repertory two of Molière's comédie^S-ballets: Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, performed thirteen times, and Le Malade imaginaire, performed forty-nine times. We have already noted that Charpentier was forced to modify his score for the latter work in order to comply with the limitations imposed by Lully. In fact, it would appear that the intermèdes were altered at least twice, no doubt as the restrictions became ever more severe, for volume VII of Charpentier's works in manuscript contains 'Le Malade imaginaire rajusté autrement pour la troisième fois', and volume XXII contains a 'Second air pour les tapissiers du Malade imaginaire réformé pour la troisième fois'.² The application of the rules governing the use of theatrical music is most clearly seen where the prologue of Le Malade imaginaire is concerned. Instead of the 'Eglogue en musique et en danse' involving 'Flore, Pan, Climène, Daphné, Tircis, Dorilas, deux Zéphirs, Troupe de Bergères et de Bergers',³ 'L'ouverture du théâtre se fait par un bruit agréable d'instruments. Ensuite une Bergère vient se plaindre de ce qu'elle ne trouve aucun remède pour soulager les peines qu'elle endure. Plusieurs Faunes et Aegipans ... écoutent ses plaintes et forment un spectacle très divertissant.'⁴ All of which was well within the capacities of the two singers and six instrumentalists allowed.

² Molière, Oeuvres complètes, p. 1084.

³ Ibid., p. 1091.

⁴ Ibid., p. 1098.

One new work presented during the 1674-5 season also included a certain amount of spectacle. This was Montauban's comedy derived from Rabelais, Les Aventures et le mariage de Panurge, of which La Grange remarked in his Registre: 'Il y a beaucoup de frais' (I, 162). In Act IV, scene 5 of this work, there occurs a storm at sea during which the hero escapes from his pursuers in a small boat. We have already had occasion to mention the bill for twenty pistoles presented by Pierre Prat for items of scenery no doubt used for this scene. These were: 'huit bandes de mer contenant vingt pieds de long sur quatre pieds de haut ... la perspective de dix-sept pieds de large sur neuf pieds et demi de haut ... un <sic> toile d'horizon en tempête ... quatorze ailes de rocher soit d'un côté que d'autre ... une barque peinte' (R II, 51, 53 v^o). Lancaster puts forward the view, no doubt correct, that the perspective would have represented a calm sea over which the back-cloth representing the storm would have been dropped at the appropriate moment.⁵ Evidence to this effect is provided by another bill asking 3 livres for a 'lien de fer que j'ai posé à la braye de la roue dentelée de la tempête de la mer' (R II, 65 v^o). Lancaster is almost certainly mistaken, however, when he suggests that the boat was painted onto one of the 'bandes de mer' behind which Panurge and the others could appear. This is, in fact, incompatible with the evidence which gives the 'bandes de mer' and the 'barque peinte' as separate items. It would seem more likely that the flat, painted boat, with the actors behind it, was pulled along on a truck, in between two of the 'bandes', Panurge and his companions thus appearing to sail across the open sea. Prat had earlier provided the décors for Molière's Dom Juan, performed at the Palais-Royal in 1665,⁶ and the 'Antre du Sommeil' for De Visé's Les Amours du Soleil performed

⁵ History, IV, 447.

⁶ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, pp. 399-401.

at the Marais in 1671. In the livre de sujet of the latter work, he is described as 'un des plus habiles hommes de France: et qui a la main la plus hardie pour la détrempe'.⁷ Panurge was first performed on 3 August 1674, and was given a total of thirteen times in 1674-5 before being dropped from the Guénégaud company's repertory.

The first reference to occur in the Guénégaud Registres relating to the production of Circé was hardly auspicious. On 7 October 1674, it was entered: 'L'on n'a point joué mardi 3^e et vendredi 5^e octobre à cause des désordres que M. Dauvilliers et Mlle Dupin ont incités dans la troupe au sujet de la pièce de Circé' (R II, 77). In fact, the dates on which the troupe were unable to perform were 2 and 5 October 1674, as was correctly noted by La Grange. He is also more precise as to the reason behind the disagreement stirred up by the two company members: 'On n'a point joué à cause des désordres entre la troupe et M. Dauvilliers et Mlle Dupin qui ne voulaient point consentir qu'on jouât Circé' (I, 163).⁸ The company held another meeting 'pour la préparation de Circé', a week later on 12 October, 'et délibéra par écrit de la jouer incessamment. M. Dauvilliers et Mlle Dupin, animés par les Sieurs de Sourdéac et Champeron qui voulaient profiter des désordres de la troupe ne voulurent point signer la délibération'.⁹ According to La Grange, in the following days, 'Le 17^e et 18^e. La troupe fit ce qui lui fut possible pour terminer tous les différends. On députa à M. le marquis de Sourdéac qui était à sa maison de Sève, on fit parler à M.

⁷ Jean Donneau De Visé, Sujet des Amours du Soleil, tragédie en machines, (Paris, 1671), p. 13.

⁸ Circé is, in fact, mentioned earlier in La Grange's Registre, when, in a marginal note, he states that the 600 livres received for the performance of Le Malade imaginaire at Versailles were put towards covering the expenses of the machine play (I, 162). This entry was, no doubt, added at a later date.

⁹ La Grange, Registre, I, 164.

Dauvilliers' (I, 164). This is found confirmed in the official company Registres, where it is recorded that 1 livre 10 sols were paid to Le Breton on 14 October for a journey to Sève, and 9 livres to La Grange on 16 October, 'pour deux voyages à Sève ... pour parler avec M. le marquis de Sourdéac pour la machine de Circé' (R II, 80-1). These negotiations evidently proved fruitless, and, according to La Grange, 'Enfin, ne pouvant les mettre à la raison, on délibéra l'exclusion desdits sieur Dauvilliers et Mlle Dupin et la rupture du traité de société avec MM. de Sourdéac et de Champeron pour le plus tôt qu'il serait possible' (I, 164).

It is usually suggested that Dauvilliers and Mlle Dupin hesitated on account of the high expenditure involved in the production of a machine play.¹⁰ It is curious, however, that it should have been two of the former Marais company actors who behaved in this way, whom one might have expected to be accustomed to the preparation of such works. Du Tralage places a rather more personal interpretation upon these events and their subsequent resolution:

Le Procès comique

De la belle Dupin la Molière jalouse
 Lui fit, pour l'exclure, un procès.
 Bien des gens partagés prenaient leurs intérêts,
 Et faisaient du bruit comme douze.
 D'abord Thémis se déclara
 Pour la veuve contre l'épouse,
 Et pour jamais les sépara.
 De ce beau jugement, qui trompa mainte attente,
 La Dupin se porte appelante,
 Malgré l'amende et coetera.
 'Il faut, dit-elle, il faut qu'enfin je me contente,
 Et, arrive ce qu'il pourra,
 L'Oracle souverain qui règne et qui gouverne
 Ce que dit, ce que fait l'Oracle subalterne,
 Met l'appellation et sentence au néant,
 En amendant et corrigeant
 (Voyant dans ces belles parties
 Différentes beautés, mais si bien assorties);

¹⁰ Despois, Théâtre français, p. 123.

Ordonne que dorénavant
 Elles seront ensemble unies.
 Si mieux pourtant on aime (en termes fort exprès
 L'arrêt fait cette alternative,
 En cas qu'on veuille l'exclusive)
 Donner à ceux exclus, pendant quatre ans complets,
 Pour leur indemnité, dommages, intérêts,
 Chacun 500 écus, et leur faire partage
 Des droits et des émoluments
 Qu'on a perçus pendant le temps
 Qu'a duré la querelle et ce comique orage,
 Comme aussi leur a fait raison
 Et leur rendre à proportion
 Ce que sur chacun d'eux on a pris de finance
 Pour certains paiements, pour certaine dépense,
 Dont on juge que les exclus
 Ne doivent point être tenus:
 Ce qu'on sera tenu d'opter dedans l'octave;
 Autrement, les huit jours passés,
 L'option référée à Dauvilliers le brave
 A l'égard des dépens, on les a compensés.
 POLYMENE

Epigramme

Cet arrêt vaut de la monnaie,
 Et tout Paris a de la joie
 De voir triompher la Dupin;
 La Molière et son idolâtre,
 Consternés en ont un chagrin
 Qui n'est pas, ma foi, de théâtre.¹¹

It is also surprising that Dauvilliers and Mlle Dupin were encouraged in their obstinacy by Sourdéac and Champeron, since, in their capacity as machinistes to the company, one might have expected the production of a machine play to be to their advantage, not to say vital to their position. This did, ultimately, prove to be the case, for, in a 'Placet' addressed to the King during the course of their long legal battle with Sourdéac and Champeron, the Guénégaud company claimed that they had honoured the terms of their contract with the two machinistes 'autant de temps que Votre Majesté leur a permis l'usage des machines et décorations de ce théâtre, par celui des musiques vocales et instrumentales', but that once this had been denied them by the terms of

¹¹ Notes et documents, pp. 19-22.

the ordonnance of 21 March 1675, 'ils sont obligés d'implorer sa justice personnelle contre l'irréparable préjudice qu'ils en recevraient, si les choses demeuraient entre eux et lesdits sieurs de Sourdéac et de Champeron au violent et ruineux état où elles se trouvent par les termes de cette prétendue société'.¹² One can only wonder, therefore, what the motives of Sourdéac and Champeron could have been in attempting to prevent the production of Circé. Might it have been that they wished the Guénégaud to fail in order to regain total control of their theatre and the company now occupying it? This would hardly appear likely given that they were themselves members of the company and that they would in so doing have been risking their own livelihood. Nevertheless, taken in conjunction with La Grange's later comments that the entire dispute was the product of 'les artifices desdits Sourdéac et Champeron qui voulaient se rendre maîtres de la recette et du contrôle' (I, 168), it would appear that this was, indeed, their ultimate aim.

Although it is specifically stated in the Registres that Dauvilliers and Mlle Dupin alone refused to sign the document recording the company's decision to proceed with the preparation of Circé, when it came to their dismissal from the Guénégaud company, their spouses too were excluded. Thus, on 19 October 1674, the takings from that day's performance of Le Malade imaginaire were 'partagé sans M. Dauvilliers et M. Dupin sur le pied de 14 parts et demie',¹³ that is to say, minus the shares of Dauvilliers and Mlle Dupin and the half shares of their respective spouses, but with half a share being awarded to the composer Charpentier (R II, 82). A 'Sentence du Châtelet' of 6 November 1674 confirmed the exclusion of the two couples, stipulating that they should each receive 1,500 livres per annum until the expiry of the act of

¹² Dossier Sourdéac et Champeron.

¹³ La Grange, Registre, I, 164.

association of 3 May 1673, and further ordering that Sourdéac and Champeron should honour the terms of their contract of 23 May.¹⁴

At this point there arose a further complication, for, according to La Grange: 'Ici Mlle De Brie prit le parti de M. Dauvilliers et Dupin et ne voulut plus jouer et fit la malade' (I, 165). She and her husband joined the Dauvilliers and Dupin couples in appealing against the 'Sentence du Châtelet' on 29 December 1674. The case was referred to the Parquet des Gens du Roi. On 8 January 1675, the actors of the Guénégaud company presented a petition claiming that Sourdéac and Champeron had failed to comply with the ___ 'Sentence' and had further failed to admit that the machinery they had been ordered to construct so that Circé might be performed on 15 January would not, through their negligence, be ready until well after that date, and that they should be paid the 16,000 livres owed to them and expelled from the company.¹⁵ This document is important in that it informs us of the date on which the Guénégaud company had originally intended to begin their performances of Circé.

Judgement was given on 16 January 1675, confirming the 'Sentence' of 29 December 1674 excluding the Dauvilliers and Dupin couples, unless the company now preferred to reinstate them. On 23 January the troupe made it known to the court that their decision was to pay the sum set and proceed with the exclusion, and the following day the four objectors were notified of this.¹⁶ La Grange adds in a marginal note that, definitive judgement having been given against him, 'le marquis de Sourdéac, par dépit, faisait défaire les machines au lieu de les avancer pour mater la troupe', further claiming that the entire dispute had been

¹⁴ Bonnassies, Histoire administrative, p. 47.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

the result of his and Champeron's actions (I, 168). Finally, on 12 February 1674, M. and Mlle Dauvilliers and M. and Mlle Dupin were reintegrated into the Guénégaud company on exactly the same footing as before their exclusion. As they had, however, lost their shares for the whole of the intervening period, the troupe, in a gesture of conciliation, awarded 600 livres in compensation to each couple, 'pour se mettre en état de jouer Circé au premier jour'.¹⁷ La Grange's tone is rather more disapproving when he comes to describe the concessions the company were forced to make to Sourdéac and Champeron, 'pour avoir la paix et entretenir union' (I, 169). These took the form of 500 livres each to compensate them 'pour leurs parts et portions de l'argent qui avait été retiré ou est par-dessus les parts mentionnées aux deux registres', that is money which had been kept back and put towards paying off the company's debts in which Sourdéac and Champeron were deemed to have no share. The two machinistes were further allowed two contrôleurs who were stationed at the doors to the boxes and the parterre (R II, 138 v°). La Grange adds that Champeron had wanted his brother to be admitted to work in the box-office, which the company did not permit, and concludes: 'tous les procès ont été éteints et on n'a plus songé qu'à jouer Circé au plus tôt' (I, 169).

Nevertheless, in 1677, some two years after the production of Circé, Sourdéac and Champeron recommenced their plotting. The troupe seized on this opportunity to get rid of them once and for all, obtaining an annulment of the contract of 23 May 1673 on 3 April 1677, and keeping back the two shares of the machinistes as from 7 May 1677. A long legal battle ensued, with judgement being given on 29 July 1677, but not enforced until 21 August 1681, according to which, Sourdéac and Champeron each received a pension of 500 livres per annum from 1 March

¹⁷ La Grange, Registre, I, 169.

1677 onwards, with Champeron's passing to his brother on his death.¹⁸ Even as late as March 1683, Champeron was claiming that he was owed money by the Comédie-Française, in compensation for his share of the 1,273 livres 10 sols held back to cover expenses from the first six performances of Le Festin de pierre, given when he was still a company member, and of the money held back to pay for the new chandeliers installed just before his exclusion.¹⁹

During the period of their legal dispute with Dauvilliers and Mlle Dupin and Sourdéac and Champeron prior to the production of Circé, the Guénégaud company's Registre of 1674-5 contains frequent references to sums paid for journey/s made on behalf of the troupe. We have already seen that it was the custom for theatrical companies in times of difficulty to appeal to their patrons at Court and elsewhere to act on their behalf. On only one occasion is the word 'sollicitation' specifically used to refer to such journeys, when on 26 October 1674, 16 livres 10 sols were paid, 'pour plusieurs voyages de chaises pour les sollicitations' (R II, 85). Elsewhere, it is frequently difficult to determine whether these journeys relate to the company's legal dispute or else to the preparations for Circé which had by then begun. The payments entered in the Registre are as follows:

JOURNEYS MADE ON BEHALF OF THE GUENEGAUD COMPANY PRIOR TO THE PRODUCTION OF CIRCE

14 Oct Au Breton pour un voyage fait à Sève ... 1^l 10^s
 16 Oct Pour deux voyages à Sève de M. de La Grange pour parler avec M.
 le Marquis de Sourdéac pour la machine de Circé ... 9^s
 21 Oct Pour un voyage de Versailles pour la compagnie ... 14^s
 23 Oct Pour un voyage de chaise ... 1^l 5^s

¹⁸ For an account of this second stage of the legal battle between the Guénégaud company, Sourdéac and Champeron, see Bonnassies, Histoire administrative, pp. 48-9, and Edouard Thierry, Supplément à la notice sur Varlet de La Grange ou dossier tiré des Archives de la Comédie-Française (Paris, 1876), pp. 7-9.

¹⁹ Dossier Sourdéac and Champeron.

"	A Subtil sur les voyages qu'il a faits à Versailles ... 14*
26 Oct	Pour plusieurs voyages de chaises pour des sollicitations ... 16* 10 ^s
28 Oct	A Subtil pour reste de ses voyages ... 15*
"	Pour un voyage de chaise à M. de La Roque ... 1* 10 ^s
30 Oct	Pour voyages de chaises pour les affaires de la compagnie ... 20* 10 ^s
2 Nov	Pour un voyage de chaise ... 1* 10 ^s
4 Nov	Pour un voyage de chaise demi-journée ... 5*
6 Nov	Pour plusieurs voyages de chaises pour les affaires de la troupe à M. Du Frois et Mlle de Molière ... 26* 10 ^s
9 Nov	Pour les voyages de chaise pour les affaires de la compagnie ... 22*
11 Nov	Assistants et ouvriers, surcroit de chandelle et voyages de chaise ... 21* 5 ^s
13 Nov	Pour une demi-journée de carrosse à Mlle de Molière ... 5*
20 Nov	Pour un voyage fait à Saint-Germain pour les affaires de la compagnie ... 32* 10 ^s
23 Nov	Pour plusieurs voyages de chaise pour les affaires de la compagnie ... 9*
25 Nov	Pour voyages de chaise pour la compagnie ... 3* 10 ^s
30 Nov	Pour des voyages de chaise roulante pour les affaires de la compagnie ... 8* 10 ^s
2 Dec	Pour deux voyages de chaise pour les affaires de la compagnie ... 2* 10 ^s
7 Dec	Pour avoir été chez M. le marquis trois voyages pour porter trois mines de charbon de terre, pour avoir été au Palais Royal quérir du carton, pour avoir été à la <illegible> six fois quérir des chevilles de fer, ... pour avoir été dans la rue Quincampoix chez le procureur de la part de la troupe, pour avoir été chez un avocat dans la rue de la Touandrie de la part de la troupe ²⁰
14 Dec	Pour des carrosses ... 9* 8 ^s
18 Dec	Pour plusieurs voyages de chaises pour les affaires de la compagnie ... 14* 5 ^s
21 Dec	Pour un voyage de chaise ... 1* 10 ^s
23 Dec	Pour des chaises pour M. Du Croisy ... 5* 10 ^s
"	Pour un voyage de chaise pour la compagnie ... 1* 10 ^s
28 Dec	Pour des voyages de chaise pour les affaires de la compagnie ... 26* 15 ^s
30 Dec	Pour des voyages de chaise pour les affaires de la compagnie ... 11* 10 ^s
1 Jan	Pour des carrosses pour les affaires de la compagnie ... 14* 10 ^s
4 Jan	Pour des voyages de chaise pour les affaires de la compagnie ... 9* 5 ^s
6 Jan	Pour une chaise pour les affaires de la compagnie ... 4* 10 ^s
8 Jan	Pour deux voyages de chaise pour les affaires de la compagnie ... 7* 10 ^s
13 Jan	Pour des voyages de chaise pour les affaires de la compagnie ... 25* 15 ^s
15 Jan	Pour des voyages de chaise pour les affaires de la compagnie ... 9* 9 ^s

²⁰ These items are included in a mémoire dated 7 December 1674, the total payment for which was 6 livres (R II, 112 v^o). It would appear to be in the handwriting of Le Breton.

18 Jan Pour des voyages de chaise pour les affaires de la compagnie ...
10^s
20 Jan Pour onze voyages du Breton ... 1^l 10^s
22 Jan Pour des voyages de chaise pour les affaires de la compagnie ...
9^l 11^s
25 Jan Pour des voyages de chaise pour les affaires de la compagnie ...
5^l 12^s
" Pour Le Breton pour cinq voyages ... 15^s
27 Jan Menus frais et voyages ... 3^l 12^s 6^d
" Pour deux voyages du crocheteur et pour avoir aidé à remuer deux
châssis ... 1^l 10^s

The fact that journeys 'pour les affaires de la compagnie' apparently ceased to be made on 25 January 1675, the day after the Guénégaud troupe made known their decision to pay the sum laid down by the court and expel the Dauvilliers and Dupin couples, would make it seem likely that the majority of these were made in connection with the company's legal dispute. Indeed, there appears a clear distinction between those journeys made by Le Breton for the preparation of Circé, for which he was paid approximately 3 sols per trip, and those for which transport had to be hired. Other payments entered in the Guénégaud Registre of 1673-4, would also appear to relate to the company's legal dispute. These include: 6 livres 3 sols 'à M. d'Estriché pour un déjeuner' on 28 October, 1 livre 'pour une sommation donnée à un sergent' on 25 November, 2 livre 5 sols to 'Mme Ourlies pour un déjeuner' on 30 November, 20 livres 1 sol 'pour un dîner d'hier pour la compagnie' on 2 December, 8 livres 14 sols on 'dépenses pour les affaires de la compagnie' on 4 December, and 6 livres 12 sols 6 deniers in 'frais pour les affaires de la compagnie' on 7 December (R II, 86, 99, 101, 101-4).

PREPARATION

Machines and special effects

The Guénégaud company did not wait for the resolution of their disagreement with Dauvilliers and Mlle Dupin to proceed with the

preparations for the production of Circé. La Grange notes in the margin alongside his entry for 23 October 1674: 'Commencé la dépense des machines de Circé et en continuant jusqu'à la première représentation' (I, 165). The official Registre puts 'this starting date even earlier, with 9 livres 10 sols being paid on 14 October 1674, for 'clous et ouvriers pour la machine de Circé' (R II, 80). Such entries occur on almost every page of the Guénégaud company's Registre over the next months. Indeed, work on Circé may have begun even earlier, since, as we have seen, 'bois pour le globe' costing a total of 86 livres 4 sols was purchased in April, May and June 1674, at the very beginning of the 1674-5 season; and, according to the Registre, the first preparations for Circé were undertaken, 'depuis le 29^e avril 1674 jusqu'au 17^e juillet pour la première fois, pendant lequel temps on a travaillé au globe' (R II, 145 v^o). It may have been, however, that the company had decided to present an elaborate machine play of the type requiring an upper stage level, without having a particular work in mind. In which case the cost of wood for this second stage would have been included with the expenses for Circé simply because this was the machine play that was eventually selected.

We have already had occasion to mention De Visé's claim in his obituary article on Thomas Corneille in Le Mercure galant of January 1710, that it had been his idea to use 'les mouvements des opéra' which remained in the Guénégaud theatre from the time of its occupation by Perrin's Académie de Musique, and that accordingly, he and Thomas Corneille searched for 'un sujet favorable à mettre ces machines dans leur jour', with such success that 'lorsque la pièce parut elle ne ressemblait en rien aux opéra qui avaient été chantés sur le même théâtre' (pp. 284-5). In fact, as we will see, a considerable amount of time and money was expended by the Guénégaud company on the construction

of the machines for Circé. This would hardly have been the case if the troupe had been content to employ those which it had found already present in the theatre, even if refurbished. De Visé, however, uses two terms in this context: 'les mouvements' and 'les machines'. It is probable, therefore, that the troupe used the counterbalance systems it had purchased along with the Guénégaud theatre, but that the machines themselves were largely constructed from scratch, with those already present being used either as a framework, or else to provide materials.

The 'bande des ouvriers pour les machines de Circé' was composed of as many as sixteen 'ouvriers' or skilled workers, and five 'manoeuvres' or labourers, with the frequent assistance of carpenters and joiners, a mason, a turner, a smith, a sweep, a 'serrurier' or metal-worker, two painters and a number of 'crocheteurs' or carriers. Certain of these are known to us by name - 'Mathurin le forgeron', 'Du Fer ouvrier' and the painters Dalaiseau and Saint-Martin for example. They were hired to supplement the Guénégaud company's regular back-stage employees: the décorateurs Crosnier and Du Breuil, and those workers whose names appear regularly in the Registres: Crosnier l'aîné, Le Breton, Subtil, Dufors, and Des Barres.

Amongst the materials purchased for the construction of the décors and machines was a considerable quantity of wood of different types, including 'deux toises de bois d'orme' and 'une pièce de bois de sapin', and of iron, for example 'cent treize livres de fer' on 4 December 1674 (R II, 99, 103, 117). Other items mentioned include: 'clous de toutes sortes', tacks (broquette), bolts (chevilles de fer), hinges (e.g. 'vingt paires de briquets à 8 sols la paire', R II, 107 v°), cart grease (vieux oing), glue, flour, plaster, tow (filasse), cables (fils de fer), thread, cloth (e.g. 'cent vingt-neuf ~~au~~aines et demi de toile à 14 sols l'~~au~~ne' and 'de la grosse toile', R II, 109 v°, 141 v°), cardboard and

paper of different qualities (cartons, carton broché, papier brouillon, papier à patron and papier gris). References to other items of a more practical nature, are also to be found, such as knives, soap, and coal, but above all to firewood of different kinds (cotterets, bûches, fagots, falourde) and to bougie and chandelle for lighting. Chandelle was issued to those working on the décors on a daily basis. From the records we discover that Sourdéac received quantities of chandelle between 8 and 15 February 1675 (R II, 130-3), which would seem to indicate that during this period he was actively involved in the construction of the machines for Circé. This is interesting when considered in relation to La Grange's comment that after the troupe's decision to expel the Dauvilliers and Dupin couples on 23 January, Sourdéac 'par dépit, faisait défaire les machines au lieu de les avancer' (I, 162). If so, it would probably have been at this time, and the sums paid 'à la femme qui garde les décorations de Circé' from 22 January onwards, would have been in vain (R II, 123).²¹ However, Sourdéac would appear to have begun work on the machines somewhat earlier, for a mémoire dated 7 December 1674, requests payment 'pour avoir été chez M. le marquis trois voyages pour porter trois mines de charbon de terre' (R II, 112 v°).

The wood and iron would have been used to construct flats, and other elements of décor, over which cloth and paper were stretched, which were then decorated by the painters and décorateurs. It would seem that certain of these flats were completed as early as 23 November 1674, for on that date, 12 livres were paid 'pour six manoeuvres qui ont travaillé deux jours à porter les châssis pour Circé (R II, 98). Similarly, in December 1674, Le Breton submitted an account which included the item, 'pour avoir sorti et rentré les châssis pour

²¹ This service was provided at the rate of 1 livre per week, and sums were paid on 5, 12, and 24 February 1675 (R II, 129, 132, 137).

plusieurs fois', and in January 1675, 1 livre was paid to him 'pour deux demi-journées ... pour aider à remuer les châssis' (R II, 112 v°, 120 v°). Later that same month 1 livre 10 sols was paid 'pour avoir aidé à remuer deux châssis', and in February 1675, Le Breton received 1 livre 'pour avoir aidé à monter les châssis du globe sur le plafond' (R II, 125 v°, 128 v°). To cover the flats, the company purchased new cloth, but also had old material washed and re-used. On 16 December 1674, 2 livres were paid 'pour avoir cousu des toiles'; and on 30 December, 6 livres, 'pour le blanchissage des toiles pour Circé' (R II, 108, 113). An unfortunately largely illegible mémoire of January 1675, gives details of the preparation of the châssis for Circé prior to their decoration by the painters: the tradesperson in question provided 'soixante-trois pièces de châssis qui ont été <macérées> par lesdits peintres à raison de 5 sols pour chacun' (R II, 122 v°). This, no doubt, refers to the soaking of the cloths in glue or size in order to make them stiff enough to handle. Later that same month, 10 sols were paid 'pour du fil pour coudre les toiles', soon followed by 3 livres 'pour tendre les toiles' (R II, 124 v°, 125 v°). In February, a further 8 livres 8 sols 'ont été données à une blanchisseuse pour avoir lavé plusieurs morceaux de toile' (R II, 130 v°). Nor were simple pieces of cloth the only items to be re-used; on 18 December 1674, 17 livres were paid to M. Mécard 'pour le blanchissage des frises et bandes de ciel' (R II, 109). These would have been suspended above the stage to mask partially the cables used for the operation of the machines, and to give the effect of either a ceiling or the sky. The rear surface of certain of the châssis would appear to have been covered with paper, for in April 1675, 4 livres 10 sols were paid 'à Des Barres pour coller du papier derrière les châssis', and 5 livres 14 sols 'à Crosnier le père ... pour <le jour> du papier derrière les châssis <et> pour reblanchir

les murailles de la maison que les peintres ont occupée pour la troupe' (R II, 147 ff.).

The painters employed by the Guénégaud company to provide the décors for Circé were Dalaiseau and Saint-Martin, who were later also to provide the décors for both L'Inconnu and Le Triomphe des dames. This is known from the fact that in the record of the frais extraordinaires incurred in the preparation of Circé it is stated that 250 livres were paid, 'aux sieurs Dalaiseau et Saint-Martin peintres pour les augmentations de peinture et décorations' (R II, 142 v°). The original sum agreed between the company and the two painters was 1,800 livres, but, unfortunately we have no details as to how this figure was arrived at (R II, 145 v°). This can be compared with the 700 livres paid to the same men for the décors of L'Inconnu and the 1,200 livres for Le Triomphe des dames (R III, 95 v°; IV, 45 v°). We have already seen that a house was hired by the Guénégaud company in which the painters worked, and which was restored to its original state after their occupancy.

According to Thomas Corneille in his introduction to the livre de sujet of Circé, three painters were employed on the décors for this work. He writes:

Tout ce que j'en pourrais dire serait tellement au-dessous de ce qu'on verra, que je ne diminuerai point le plaisir de la surprise par l'inutile description des merveilles qui paraîtront dans ce magnifique spectacle. On n'a rien épargné pour le rendre tout à fait somptueux et les riches décorations qui l'accompagnent, feront voir par dix changements de théâtre, la gloire que méritent Messieurs de la Hire, de Lessos <Dalaiseau> et de S. Martin, pour les embellissements que leur pinceau nous a fournis.²²

There is, however, no reference to a M. de La Hire to be found in the Guénégaud Registres.

²² Thomas Corneille, Circé, tragédie ornée de machines, de changements de théâtre, et de musique (Paris, 1675).

As far as the operation of the machines involved in the production of Circé is concerned, details are scarce. On 30 November 1674, 'huit grandes poulies de cuivre jaune' were purchased, on 4 December, 'un modèle d'une poulie pour la machine de Circé', and later in December, a door was constructed 'au cointrepoids qui est au-dessus de la loge de M. Du Croisy (R II, 101 v°, 103, 111 v°). Supplementary lead for the counterbalance system was apparently purchased by Sourdéac on behalf of the troupe, for in March 1675, he was paid 133 livres 2 sols 'pour du plomb et autres choses', and the Marquis also seems to have arranged for the lighting of his machines, for a messenger was sent by him to the marchand de plaques in February 1675 and ninety plaques at 7½ sols each were purchased a week later (R II, 142 v°, 130 v°, 133 v°). More plaques in fer blanc worth 22 livres were accounted for in the final statement of the frais extraordinaires for Circé (R II, 142 v°). Wires and cables for the operation of the machines to the value of 189 livres were purchased from M. Charpentier 'marchand de fils de fer', and a further 470 livres were paid 'au cordier qui a fourni les cables et cordages nécessaires pour les machines' (R II, 141 v°, 143 v°).

Occasionally, in the accounts relating to the production of Circé, it is specifically stated for which element of the décor a particular item was purchased or work was carried out. We have already considered the references to work carried out on the 'globe'. In January 1675, 10 sols was spent on 'fil pour les nuages' (R II, 125 v°). The machine in the form of a small cloud was one of the devices most frequently used for the appearance on stage of minor divinities. Clouds are used in this way in the prologue to Circé, in which Mars appears in his chariot, to be joined by La Fortune 'portée sur un nuage', and L'Amour and La Renommée 'portés chacun sur un nuage'. Another common use of the cloud in the machine play was as a masking device. Clouds are thus employed in

Act III, scene 7 of Circé, in which 'on voit paraître en l'air plusieurs nuages, qui s'étant ramassés pour enfermer Circé et Sylla, leur donnent lieu à l'une et l'autre de se dérober aux yeux de Glaucus. Ensuite le nuage s'ouvre et se dissipe des deux côtés du théâtre'.

In early February 1675, a quantity of 'toile de coton' was purchased 'pour faire un optique du palais' (R II, 129 v°). Three palaces feature among the various décors described in the stage directions to Circé: one in Corinthian style which forms the décor of Act III, and those of Venus, the Sun and Jupiter, which appear in Act III, scene 8, Act IV, scene 5 and Act V, scene 10 respectively. In both the palace of Venus and the palace of the Sun, the optique or perspective is described as a particular feature. In the former it is said to ~~'représente deux Amours....~~ ^[représenter] avec un berceau soutenu par quatre Amours en forme de termes qui le supportent. Il est fait de feuillages et de jasmins, au milieu desquels on voit une table de marbre, remplie de corbeilles de fleurs et de vases'. Of the latter, it is said that 'L'optique ... est toute transparente, et jette un éclat qui éblouit'.

Some days after the purchase of the 'toile de coton' above, 'un aulne de petit carton' was bought on behalf of the company 'pour faire les feuillages' (R II, 132 v°). It is frequently difficult to determine to what extent the décors described in the stage directions to machine plays would have been created in three dimensions, and to what extent they would have been represented by being painted in perspective on a backcloth and flats. The 'feuillages' mentioned above, however, would probably have been used as part of the decoration of Act II of Circé, which consisted of:

... un jardin rempli de berceaux, de fontaines, de plantes, de fleurs et de vases, sur lesquels sont des enfants montés sur des cygnes qui jettent de l'eau. On y voit encore d'autres vases de porcelaine, de terre ciselée, et de marbre

blanc. Les ornements en sont d'or, et ces vases sont remplis d'orangers, d'arbres fruitiers, et de fleurs naturelles.

It was possibly in order to provide fruit for these trees that on three occasions during the run of Circé, oranges were purchased on behalf of the company: two for 3 livres on 2 April 1675, eight for 1 livre 4 sols on 5 May 1675, and an unspecified number for 13 sols on 19 May 1675 (R II, 146; III, 6, 12). It may also have been in connection with this Act that Crosnier received 1 livre 10 sols 'pour des gazons' (R III, 12).

After the décors were painted, a certain number were also gilded. Thus, in February 1675, 'sept <couches> d'or' were bought 'pour dorer les frontons du palais du Soleil' (R II, 134 v°). And, elsewhere, references occur to the purchase of gold, mussis (mosaic gold or disulphide of tin), and oripeau (tinsel, foil or Dutch gold). Gold is a feature of the vast majority of the décors described in the stage directions to Circé. The temple 'que la Gloire a fait élever pour le Roi' of the prologue, has columns 'dont les bases et les chapiteaux sont d'or, aussi bien que les modillons et les fleurs de lys qui sont les ornements des corniches et des frises'. The porcelaine, earthenware and marble vases in the garden in Act II are decorated with gold. The Corinthian palace of Act III has pilasters 'de lapis veiné d'or ... avec les chapiteaux des pilastres et les bases d'or', and, on pedestals, 'qui sortent en saillie, des vases d'or, de lapis, et de marbre'. In the palace of Venus which appears in scene 3 of the same act, the cornice is supported by 'quantité d'Amours.... Ils sont de marbre blanc jusqu'au milieu du corps, dont le bas se forme en fleurons d'or, et se termine en consoles enrichies d'ornements aussi d'or', and the pedestal directly beneath the cornice is 'orné de ⁿpan_Leaux d'azur veiné d'or'. And the palace of Jupiter which appears in Act V, scene 10, also has a considerable quantity of gold in its decoration. The palace is:

... d'une architecture composée. Elle forme de grands piédestaux, sur lesquels sont en saillie des aigles tous rehaussés d'or fin, qui supportent une corniche solide, dans la frise de laquelle sont peintes des pommes de pin d'or fin ciselé. Au-dessus de la corniche se forment des cintres surbaissés, enrichis de quantité d'ornements, avec des festons d'or qui pendent au-dessous des cintres, et s'attachent au milieu et aux angles.... Au milieu des piédestaux sont de gros festons de feuilles de chêne d'or fin ciselé. On voit dans le fond du palais un trône tout d'or, et orné de pierres précieuses.

As for the palace of the Sun which appears in Act IV, scene 6:

Ce palais est d'or, composé avec des colonnes torsées d'or poli, qui sont revêtues de branches de laurier qui les environne, de couleur naturelle. Les chapiteaux sont d'or ciselé, et les bases des colonnes de même matière, aussi bien que la frise et la corniche.... Les panneaux sont enrichis de veines d'or sur un fond de lapis. Au-dessous de la corniche on voit dans une espèce de petit attique d'où naissent les cintres, des lyres d'or avec plusieurs ornements; dans le milieu des voûtes sont peints de grands soleils d'or poli avec quantité d'autres ornements.

The majority of references to specific items required for Circé, however, occur in relation to the creation of the animals. Animals are an intrinsic part of the myth of Circé - the enchantress daughter of the Sun and Persa who lived on the island of Aeaea and transformed men into animals. She is best-known, of course, for her part in the story of Odysseus, whose companions she turned into swine. Thomas Corneille's work, however, concerns the enchantress's unrequited love for Glaucus, and is taken from Book 14 of the Metamorphoses of Ovid. Glaucus, a former fisherman become a sea-god, loves the nymph Scylla, and when his love is not returned, asks Circé for her help. Unfortunately, she falls in love with Glaucus herself, and, out of jealousy, poisons a fountain where Scylla is accustomed to bathe. The unhappy nymph finds herself transformed into a six-headed monster, and barking dogs attach themselves to her body. Horrified, Scylla throws herself into the sea, where she is transformed into the rock which bears her name, and against

which, according to Thomas Corneille in his 'Argument' to Circé, 'les flots se brisant, imitent par le bruit qu'ils font, les aboiements des chiens qui avaient fait son supplice'. To this story Thomas Corneille added the character Mélicerte who is loved by Scylla, and the fact of the latter's being subsequently transformed into a sea-nymph. He also modified certain of the details relating to Scylla's transformation, as he explains in the livre de sujet: 'La fable nous représente cette Scylla environnée de chiens qui l'effrayaient par des aboiements épouvantables. Ce terme de chien est si rude et si mal-propre à notre poésie que j'ai cru le pouvoir changer en celui de monstres' (p. 45).

In Thomas Corneille's work, Circé transports Glaucus to her palace in a flying chariot drawn by dragons which descends at her command. There she threatens him with the sight of the Kings she has turned into animals for having displeased her, upon which, 'On voit paraître divers animaux, lions, ours, tigres, dragons et serpents'. Glaucus, however, is himself sufficiently powerful to cause that 'Tous les animaux sont engloutis dans la terre' (II, 8). These animals were constructed with wicker frames which were the work of the vannier or basket-maker Maître Charles. He received his first payment of 9 livres on 1 January 1675, and continued to receive sums up to March, when it was entered 'payé à Maître Charles qui a fait les animaux d'osier 19 livres 10 sols restants à payer de 56 livres 10 sols' (R II, 114, 142 v^o). The wicker frames were covered with papier brouillard, 'une rame' being bought for this purpose for 5 livres in January 1675 (R II, 120 v^o). They would then have been painted in an appropriate fashion. This construction is ~~reminiscent~~ **similar to** of that used for the animals in the revival of Lully's opera Thésée at Saint-Germain en-Laye in 1678, where the animals were made to

move thanks to children positioned inside them.²³ For Circé, however, the animals were sewn onto large sheets of cloth, since on 27 January 1675, 6 livres 10 sols were given to Mme Dufors 'pour deux draps pour les animaux', and in February another sheet was purchased for 3 livres 10 sols, and 12 sols 6 deniers were paid 'pour du fil blanc et du fil grave pour coudre les animaux aux toiles' (R II, 125, 132 v^o). This would have enabled the animals to appear almost simultaneously by means of the cloth being pulled onto the stage, and disappear in a similar fashion when it was pulled through a trap-door in the stage-floor.

The only animals specifically mentioned in the Guénégaud Registre are serpents and wild boar. The latter are not included in the list of animals which appear to Glaucus given in the text of Circé, but were presumably included on account of their connection with the Odysseus part of the Circé myth. The construction of the serpents appears to have been somewhat different from that of the other animals, for in February 1675, special tools were bought for 1 livre 10 sols 'pour travailler aux serpents', 18 sols was spent on carton broché, presumably to cover the serpents' bodies, and 15 sols was spent 'pour une feuille de fer blanc et avoir taillé les langues et les dents des serpents' (R II, 129 v^o, 131 v^o, 133 v^o). As for the wild boar, 6 livres were paid for 'six pièces de sanglier' in early February 1675, and 'deux douzaines d'aiguillons pour les sangliers', no doubt to represent bristles, were purchased for 3 livres, together with 3 sols worth of 'du fil pour coudre les sangliers'. A week later, 3 livres 6 sols were spent on a

²³ A record of the payments made in relation to this production notes: 'A Marguerite Colliquet la somme de 70 livres pour la nourriture de huit petits garçons qui ont servi dans les animaux de l'opéra Thésée'. The painter Pierre Jumel also received 'la somme de 50 livres pour des ouvrages qu'il a faits aux animaux de théâtre qui ont servi aux trois représentations' (Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale, Collection Leber, Mss 5989 f^o 45, in La Gorce, 'Opéra', p. 296).

further 'trois pièces de sanglier', and 'deux douzaines d'aiguillons' were purchased for 1 livre 4 sols (R II, 130 v^o, 134 v^o).

Costumes

Members of the Guénégaud company would have provided their own costumes for Circé. Those of the assistants were, however, hired or purchased by the troupe from Jean Baraillon, who received in payment, initially 25 livres per performance, later apparently transformed into a share in the production (R II, 139 ff.; III, 1 v^o). Other items were also provided for the assistants by the troupe. References to payments for these include: 15 livres, 'au sieur Du Troulleau gantier pour les gants qu'il a fournis aux assistants'; 11 livres, 'à M. Poussin musicien pour sa chaussure et petite oie';²⁴ 110 livres for 'les bas de soie, escarpins, rubans pour dix danseurs à 11 livres pour chacun'; 24 livres, 'pour la chaussure des sauteurs, statues, et une paire de bas de soie pour ledit M. Poussin'; 18 livres, 'pour les escarpins des satyres et statues à un écu chacun'; 75 livres, 'à Mlle Bastonnet pour sa coiffure, chaussure, petite oie et voitures des répétitions'; and 46 livres 5 sols, 'pour les escarpins et bas des sauteurs' (R II, 141 v^o - 144 v^o). When an accident occurred and Toubel had to be replaced by 'le petit Prévost', shoes and stockings costing 3 livres were provided for him too, and 'escarpins' costing 1 livre 10 sols were also bought for 'le petit Barbier' (R II, 146-147 v^o). Even the carpenters involved in the scene changes had slippers purchased for them so that they could move about backstage without being heard by the audience. Those for the menuisiers Ferrier and Flandre costing 2 livres were paid for in April

²⁴ 'Petite oie' is the term used to refer to the ribbons and other items used to decorate a costume.

1675, and a further 5 livres were spent on 'les chaussons des charpentiers' the following June (R II, 147 v^o; III, 21).

The M. Poussin and Mlle Bastonnet mentioned above were both singers. Their involvement in the production of Circé will be discussed later, as will that of the dancers or marcheurs and sauteurs or acrobats. The satyrs for whom footwear was provided appear in Act I of the play. In scene 6, three satyrs, two of whom sing risqué songs, are teased by certain of Circé's nymphs. In scene 7, they are joined by a further two of their breed. They are punished for disrespect, however, when Circé appears, for, at her command, 'Les cinq satyres sont enlevés, deux dans les deux côtés du théâtre, et les trois autres sur le cintre'. It would seem likely that it was the two singing satyrs who were allowed to escape to the sides of the stage, with the three non-singing assistants being flown up into the flies.

The statues appear in Act II, the décor of which takes the form of a garden. In scene 7: 'Un berceau s'élève tout-à-coup, soutenu par des statues de bronze qui le forment, et en sont comme les supports. Il est embelli d'un bassin avec un jet d'eau, et environné de plusieurs grenouilles, sur lesquels il y a de petits enfants assis'. In scene 10, following the failure of her animals to alarm Glaucus, Circé orders these statues to arm themselves against him, upon which: 'Les dix statues de bronze qui servent de supports au berceau, commencent à remuer'. However, Glaucus once more has the power to overcome Circé's spells, and, according to the livre de sujet: 'Il ne leur a pas plutôt donné l'ordre de se perdre dans l'air que toutes ces statues s'envolent dans tous les côtés du théâtre. Les grenouilles sautent hors du bassin où on les a vues, et s'enfonçant dans la terre laissent Circé dans une ... confusion' (p. 32). In the Guénégaud company's Registre it is recorded that during the preparations for Circé, 10 livres 10 sols were

paid for 'de la toile de coton pour faire des manteaux aux statues' (R II, 142 v^o). These would have been treated with a fabric stiffener and then painted so as to resemble bronze, while still allowing a certain degree of freedom of movement to the wearer of the garment.

On one occasion, the record entered into the Guénégaud company's Registre of a payment made for an item of costuming for Circé provides us with information as to the possible identity of the individual who would have worn it. On 26 February it was noted that 16 livres 10 sols had been given to M. Du Croisy 'pour la perruque de l'Amour' (R II, 138). Cupid, together with Mars, La Fortune, La Renommée, La Gloire, La Comédie, La Musique, Les Arts and Les Plaisirs, appears in the Prologue to Circé, where he complains that Louis has no need of his darts to make himself loved, and that the devotion he inspires in his subjects is sufficient to cause the lover to leave his mistress to follow his hero, thus demonstrating the weakness of Cupid's power. The fact that Cupid is a child is specifically mentioned in this scene:

... j'ai beau faire, j'ai beau dire;
Charmés de voir LOUIS, de marcher sur ses pas,
Quelque flatteur que pour eux je puisse être,
C'est un enfant qui parle, ils ne m'écoutent pas.... (I, 2)

It would seem likely, therefore, that the part was played by Du Croisy's son, 'le petit Du Croisy', for whom a chaise was provided to bring him to a rehearsal on 24 February 1675 (R II, 137). This may well have been Du Croisy's son François who was born in 1662, and who would, therefore have been thirteen years old at the time of the production of Circé.²⁵

Supplementary items for the decoration of costumes such as masks, garters, and knots of ribbon, and properties or 'ustensiles' were provided by a certain Mme Vagnard, for which she received 80 livres (R

²⁵ Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique, p. 81.

II, 144 v^o). Angélique Bourdon, the widow Vaignard, had been associated with Molière's troupe for some years, providing them with such goods for performances at Court from 1668 onwards.²⁶

Rehearsals

The first reference in the Guénégaud company's Registre to a rehearsal for the production of Circé occurs on 3 February 1675, some four months after preparations had first begun. On this date it is recorded that 5 livres 10 sols had been spent on 'feu et bougie' for that day's performance and 'feu de la répétition' (R II, 128). Payments of this type for 'feu' and for 'le pain et le vin de la répétition' occur on almost every page of the Registre from this time up until the first performance of Circé. These were usually small (less than 15 sols), but on one occasion, presumably when his account was settled, the cabaretier received 134 livres 6 sols 'pour les répétitions', and on another 36 livres (R II, 136, 141 v^o). The cabaretier on this last occasion was M. Massé. Two other cabaretiers also provided refreshments for the Guénégaud company during the preparation of Circé: M. Ourlies and M. Docquin (e.g. R II, 131, 136 v^o).

Occasionally, it is specifically stated for which section of the Circé company the rehearsal had been held. For example, on Friday 8 February 1675, it is noted that the rehearsal the previous Wednesday had been 'de la musique', and it was no doubt in connection with this rehearsal that 10 sols were paid 'pour avoir été quérir le clavecin proche Saint-Roch' (R II, 130 r^o, v^o). On 24 February 1675, it was entered that 13 livres 11 sols had been spent 'pour pain et vin pour les répétitions de Circé pour la musique, violons, marcheurs et sauteurs' (R II, 137). It was for this rehearsal that a chaise was provided for 'le

²⁶ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 428.

petit Du Croisy'. Transport was also provided for other members of the company to attend rehearsals, for in March 1675, 39 livres were paid 'au nommé La Brie, cocher, pour les carrosses qu'il a fournis pour les répétitions et pour un voyage à Saint-Germain-en-Laye' (R II, 141 v°). Wood for the heating of the theatre during rehearsals was provided by Mme Crosnier, the wife of the décorateur. She received 22 livres in March 1675 for 'le bois pour le chauffage des répétitions et les deux premières représentations' (R II, 142 v°). Other individuals named in connection with the rehearsals of Circé are Barbier, who received 6 livres 'pour six journées de répétitions ... plus à son homme 2 livres', and Subtil, who received 9 livres 'pour avoir gardé la porte pendant les répétitions', both in April 1675 (R II, 147 v°).

According to La Grange in his Registre, the frais extraordinaires for the production of Circé amounted to a total of 10,842 livres (I, 171). This sum, however, includes money spent throughout the 1674-5 season on the play's preparation, for example on the construction of the 'globe' and the wages of 'ouvriers'. It did not, therefore, all have to be paid off only after the production had opened. Hence the apparent disparity in the accounts between the takings and the expenses. Those debts still outstanding when the production opened were settled by means of keeping money back from the first few performances. Sometimes even the whole day's takings were set aside, thus 1,555 livres 10 sols from the first performance and 2,663 livres from the second (R II, 140 v°). Other smaller sums amounting to 961 livres 12 sols were withdrawn from the takings between 22 March and 29 March 1675, and a further 345 livres 5 sols between 2 April and 5 April 1675 (R II, 144 v°, 147 v°). Even so, the company still had to put the 600 livres they received from the King for the performance of Le Malade imaginaire at Versailles towards the payment of debts outstanding on Circé (R II, 146 v°). It would appear

somewhat ironic considering his initial attitude to the production of Circé, that when these sums were set aside, they were given into the safe-keeping of M. Dauvilliers.

In the final stages of the preparation of Circé, to allow for rehearsals on stage, the Guénégaud company was forced to close its theatre, and did not perform for two weeks, from 1 March to 15 March 1675. The revenue lost as a result of this enforced closure would have been yet another factor contributing to the prohibitive expense of the production of machine plays. Whether this expense can be adjudged to have been worthwhile, or whether the doubts of Mlle Dupin and Dauvilliers can be said to have been justified, we will see when we consider in more detail the reception Circé received.

PERFORMANCE

The first performance of Circé was given at the Guénégaud theatre on Sunday 17 March 1675, five months after the production had first been projected.

'Frais ordinaires'

The frais ordinaires or daily expenses of Circé were as follows:

MEMOIRE DES FRAIS JOURNALIERS DE 'CIRCE' ORDINAIRES

La Garde	13 [#]
Mlle Hubert	3 [#]
Mme Provost	3 [#]
Subtil	2 [#] 5 ^s
Nourrice	1 [#] 10 ^s
Contrôleurs	3 [#]
Ouvreurs de loges à 20 ^s	6 [#]
Port de lampes et tapisserie	2 [#]
Décorateurs	3 [#]
Concierge	1 [#] 10 ^s
Affiche et afficheurs	9 [#] 16 ^s
Lampes	2 [#]
Charité et balayage	1 [#] 10 ^s
	<u>51[#] 10^s</u>

Symphonie

Converset	3# 15 ^s
Marchand	3# 15 ^s
Duvivier	3# 15 ^s
Dumont	3# 15 ^s
Dufresne	3#
Courcelles	3#
Clavecin	3#
	<u>24#</u>

Cent livres de chandelle 35#

Marcheurs

La Montagne	4# 10 ^s
Dufort	3#
Des Oz	3#
Lefèvre I.	3#
Lefèvre F. ²⁷	3#
Nivelon	3#
Fonton	3#
Coupet	3#
Ragot	3#
Saint-Amand	3#
	<u>31# 10^s</u>

Dix petits voleurs à 10^s

Le frère de Provost	10 ^s
Le fils de Breton	10 ^s
Daniel	10 ^s
Le fils de Mme Provost	10 ^s
Antoine Villon	10 ^s
Bedouin	10 ^s
Antoine Berbault	10 ^s
La Vallée Bleu	10 ^s
Richard Ourlies	10 ^s
Jacob Ourlies	10 ^s
	<u>5# 28</u>

Amour et chaise 4# 10^s
 Voix et chaise 12# 10^s

²⁷ These initials are entered in the Registre in order to differentiate the Lefèvre who was employed by the Guénégaud company from the individual of the same name who appeared as an assistant with the Italian troupe.

²⁸ A marginal note was added to this record of the frais ordinaires of Circé at a later date, to the effect that that there was an 'augmentation' on the wages of the 'petits voleurs' of '5 sols sur chacun'.

Six grands voleurs

Dubreuil	1# 10 ^s
Provost	1# 10 ^s
Toubel l'aîné ²⁹	1#
François Thibaut, violon	1#
Jacques Testu, barbier	1#
François Toubel	1#
	<u>7#</u>

Quatre moyen voleurs à 15^s

Claude Barbier	15 ^s
La Vallée b. ³⁰	15 ^s
Gillot Cheron	15 ^s
Denis Mené	15 ^s
	<u>3#</u>

Dix charpentiers pour le haut à 40^s

Antoine Mené	2#
François Mené	2#
Toussaint Bourgeois	2#
Denis Bourgeois	2#
Claude Gaultier dit Champagne	2#
Edmé Gaultier son frère	2#
Claude Boquet	2#
Jean Lefèvre	2#
Claude Briart	2#
Dumesnil, menuisier	2#
	<u>20#</u>

A M. Baraillon pour les habits 25# et 2# pour les garçons	27#
Poudreur	1# 10 ^s

Dix menuisiers à 40^s

De Flandre	2#
Ferrier	2#
Dauphiné	2#
Provost	2#
La Croix	2#
Languedoc grand	2#
Languedoc petit	2#
Saint-Aubin	2#
Montelimar	2#
Parisien	2#
	<u>20#</u>

Extraordinaire	2#
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²⁹ This name replaces that of Lefèvre which has been crossed out.

³⁰ Could this be the same La Vallée Bleu who appeared in Circé as a 'petit voleur', or else a relative?

22 Manoeuvres à 20^s

Templier	Pierre Le Roy père
Crosnier le père	Pierre Le Roy frère
Des Barres	François de La Coste
François Loriau	Saint-Denis
Le Breton	Cerceau
Michel La Cour, maçon	La Roque
Michel Chauvet	François Batiste
Breton Crochu	Six Suisses
Jacques Jardinier	22 [#]

Quatre Crocheteurs à 30^s³¹

Michel Mené	1 [#] 10 ^s
Mathurin, forgeron	1 [#] 10 ^s
Antoine Cavois	1 [#] 10 ^s
Robert Vasse	1 [#] 10 ^s
	6 [#]

M. Barbier et son homme	2 [#] 10 ^s
Sauteurs	40 [#]
A la femme de Des Barres et Gros Jean	1 [#] 10 ^s
Louage des contrepoids	10 ^s
	(R II, 139 ff.)

The frais ordinaires for each performance of Circé when it was first given thus amounted to a total of 317 livres. This can be compared with the usual figure for a comedy by Molière that season of 68 livres. What is more, during the course of its run, a number of 'augmentations' were made in the daily expenses for Circé, bringing them up to 321 livres 16 sols.³²

In addition to the nineteen acting members of the company (corresponding to the nineteen speaking rôles in Circé plus L'Amour), over 120 people were involved in each performance of Circé, both on-stage, behind the scenes and front-of-house. One of the most striking features to emerge from the list of these participants given above, is the number of family groups who were associated with the Guénégaud

³¹ The Registre here includes the marginal note: 'Augmentation à M. Charpentier 5 livres 10 sols'.

³² For the first performances of the 1675-6 season, the frais ordinaires for Circé were, in fact, higher than this, on one occasion being as much as 331 livres 10 sols. They settled at roughly this level, however, on about 17 May 1675 (R III, 1, 11).

theatre. Thus we find four, or possibly even five members of the Provost family, Breton and his son, Richard and Jacob Ourlies, who were no doubt related to the cabaretier of the same name, two Toubels, four Menés, two Bourgeois, two Gaultiers, two Languedocs, the two Crosnier/s, Des Barres and his wife, and the father and son both named Pierre Le Roy.

Certain of these daily expenses were the same as those listed almost a month before, in February 1675. However, some changes had been made; for example, Duchemin who was positioned 'à la porte du parterre' (R II, 138 v°), had apparently been replaced by a certain Nourrice, and, instead of three guards and one exempt, the company now employed five guards and one exempt, no doubt on account of the larger audiences attracted by the new play. Similarly, where once there had been four ouvriers de loges, now there were six, possibly on account of the opening of the loges d'avant-scène. Other increased or additional expenses included: the hiring of a harpsichord player, the orchestra now consisting of seven rather than eight instrumentalists; 2 livres on 'lampes' rather than 1 livre as before; and 35 livres for 100 livres of 'chandelle', as opposed to 11 livres 4 sols for 32 livres.

These supplementary 'lampes' and the increased quantity of chandelle would have been used to provide extra lighting power for the many additional décors, particularly those on the upper stage level. We have already considered La Gorce's contention that quite sophisticated lighting effects were possible on the stage of the Académie Royale de Musique. The same would appear to have been true of the Guénégaud. Certainly, a number of the stage directions included in Circé would seem to suggest that specialized lighting was required. Thus, the trees which compose the décor of Act IV are said to form a wood, 'dont l'épaisseur semble être impénétrable à la clarté du soleil'. The most striking example, however, occurs in scene 5 of the same Act, with the appearance

of the palace of the Sun: 'L'optique de ce palais est toute transparente, et jette un éclat qui éblouit'. As we have seen, it is recorded in the Guénégaud Registre that a quantity of 'toile de coton' was purchased specifically for the construction of such an 'optique'. In the case of the palace of the Sun, the cloth used would, no doubt, have been thinner than that generally employed for the construction of décors, so that the light from candles positioned behind it would shine through to create a luminous effect.

Other items worthy of note in the list of the frais ordinaires of Circé are that chaises were provided not only to take the singers and 'le petit Du Croisy' to rehearsals, but also to bring them to each performance; that an unspecified number of 'garçons' were employed in connection with the costumes; that a 'poudreur' dressed the hair and wigs of the performers; that Mme Des Barres and a certain Gros-Jean performed unspecified services, possibly acting as dressers to the actresses and actors respectively; and that despite the 'mouvements' already present in the theatre, additional counterbalance systems had to be hired by the company.

Scenes and machines

The most striking feature of these expenses for the production of Circé must surely be the considerable number of additional assistants and back-stage staff who were hired. The operation of the machines and the changing of the décors necessitated the participation of ten 'charpentiers pour le haut', that is on the upper stage level, ten menuisiers or joiners, twenty-two manoeuvres or labourers, and four crocheteurs or porters. The scenic effects for which they were required included the raising of the curtain to reveal the décor of the prologue: 'un temple de riche architecture, que la Gloire a fait élever pour le Roi'. The prologue itself involved the apparition of Mars in his chariot

'au plus haut des nues, et s'abaissant vers le temple', the arrival of La Fortune 'portée sur un nuage', and those of L'Amour and La Renommée 'portés chacun sur un nuage'. At the close of the prologue a scene change occurred to reveal the décor of Act I: 'Le théâtre du prologue fait place à une décoration moins régulière, mais qui, dans son irrégularité, ne laisse pas d'avoir des beautés qui plaisent également à la vue'. This consisted of a plain, with, in the distance, a mountain with a ruined palace at its summit. Although it is not specifically stated that this was a changement à vue, this was almost certainly the case, especially as the curtain having been raised to reveal the décor of the prologue, there is no mention of it having been used for any of the remaining scene changes in Circé.

In Act I, the backstage staff would have been responsible for the operation of Circé's flying chariot drawn by dragons, which is used to transport the enchantress and Glaucus up to her palace, as well as for the transformation of the décor of this act into that of the second. Here, it is made explicit that what occurred was a changement à vue, and the reference to the décor of the first act would seem to confirm that it had appeared in a similar fashion: 'Cette grande montagne qui a paru dans le premier, s'abîme d'une manière aussi surprenante qu'elle s'était élevée, et laisse paraître en sa place un jardin rempli de berceaux, de fontaines, de plantes, de fleurs et de vases'. Scenic effects required in Act II include the apparition of the bronze berceau supported by ten statues which we have already mentioned, together with that of the animals, and the subsequent disappearance of them all.

For Act III, 'Le magnifique palais qui a servi de décoration à l'acte précédent, fait place à un superbe palais, dont l'architecture est d'ordre Corinthien'. In scene 7, as we have seen, several clouds appear and join together, allowing Circé and Scylla to disappear behind

them, before dispersing to the sides of the stage. It is in the following scene, however, that one of the most magnificent effects occurs: the appearance of Venus in her palace surrounded by 'Amours'. As we have suggested, this 'globe' would no doubt have been revealed on the Guénégaud's newly constructed upper stage level, for which so many additional workers were employed.

Act IV of Circé takes place in 'le lieu le plus désert du palais de Circé', which 'n'a point d'autre décoration que de grands arbres touffus'. However, the upper stage level was also employed in this Act for the appearance of the palace of the Sun in scene 5. For Act V, 'Une longue allée de cyprès qui forment une perspective très agréable à la vue, succède au lieu désert qui a paru dans l'acte précédent'. In Act V of Circé, there occurs something unprecedented in the work so far. Up until this point, all those scene changes to have taken place on the main stage occurred at the end of an Act, with the new décor being installed for the commencement of the next. At the close of Act V, scene 8, however, the stage directions instruct that 'Circé disparaît ainsi que son palais', and that 'Le théâtre change, et Glaucus se trouve sur le bord de la mer'. This sets the scene for the climax of the play in which Neptune appears 'sur les flots' and Jupiter in his palace (V, 10), to decide on the fate of Glaucus and Scylla. More details are given in the livre de sujet, where it is stated that 'La décoration du théâtre change en cet endroit, et on voit une nouvelle qui ^{repr}ésente la mer et son rivage. Il y a quelques arbres peints sur les châssis du devant, et des rochers sur les derniers'. When Neptune appears, he is accompanied 'de tritons, de néréides, et d'autres divinités de la mer', and he indicates to Glaucus, 'un rocher qui s'élève pour marque éternelle de la métamorphose de Scylla' (p. 46).

When we consider the various possibilities for spectacular effects provided by the myth of Circé and compare them with the above description of those to be found in Thomas Corneille's work, it becomes apparent that perhaps the most obvious occasion for spectacle has been neglected: namely Scylla's transformation into a monster. It was not that such transformations could not be effected on the seventeenth-century stage; in an examination of certain theatre designs of the period in Le Magasin pittoresque of 1867, several methods by which they could be suggested are described.³³ Such effects were generally on too small a scale, however, to provide the climax to so spectacular a production, and it may have been for this reason that Thomas Corneille and Donneau De Visé chose to seek an alternative. Instead, they elected to have Scylla's fate related in a series of récits. Firstly, in Act V, scene 5, Dorine recounts how:

Une source s'élève, et l'eau qu'elle fait choir
Ayant enveloppé Sylla qui se retire,
A Glaucus, comme à moi, la rend hideuse à voir.
Ce n'est plus cette nymphe aimable
Sur qui le ciel versa ses plus riches trésors,
Des monstres par ce charme attachés à son corps,
Font de leurs cris affreux un mélange effroyable,
Dont l'horreur à Sylla tient lieu de mille morts.
Elle s'en désespère, et sa disgrâce est telle,
Qu'en vain Glaucus s'efforce à lui prêter secours;
Le charme a commencé de faire effet sur elle,
Il n'en peut plus rompre le cours.

There follow two scenes in which Circé's total indifference to Sylla's suffering is revealed, as well as Glaucus's frustration at his inability to help her. It is only in scene 8, that Sylla's suicide is reported by Palémon:

Désespérée
De l'affreux changement qui causait ses soupirs,
Sans me vouloir entendre elle s'est retirée

³³ 'Mécaniques et machines de théâtre', p. 380.

Où la mer qu'elle voit offre à ses déplaisirs
 L'heureux secours d'une mort assurée.
 Là, d'un fixe regard envisageant les flots,
 Après quelques moments d'un calme qui m'abuse
 Fais-moi, dit-elle, ô mer, rencontrer le repos
 Que depuis si longtemps la terre me refuse!
 A ces mots, tout-à-coup, je la vois s'élancer,
 L'onde s'entrouvre, et frémit de sa chute;
 Et finissant les maux où la vie est en butte,
 Cache l'horreur du sort qui l'y fait renoncer.

The matter of fact nature of these réécits, would suggest that, if Thomas Corneille chose to present Scylla's death in this fashion, it was not in order to provide himself with the opportunity to shine by the power of his descriptions. Instead, it may have been that he did not wish to overshadow the climax of the play, and so preferred to save the spectacle for the change of scene to the sea-shore, the appearances of Jupiter and Neptune, the resurrection of Scylla and the resultant festivities which were to follow.

Flights

In addition to the operation of scene changes and machines, backstage workers would also have been involved in manipulating the equipment used to enable characters to fly. A total of twenty 'voleurs' were employed for the production of Circé: ten 'petits voleurs à 10 sols'; six 'grands voleurs', two of whom received 1 livre 10 sols, the remainder receiving 1 livre per performance; and four 'moyens voleurs à 15 sols'. Simple flights which did not involve the use of machines were called for in almost every act of Circé. In Act I, the five satyrs guilty of disrespect are disposed of, 'deux dans les deux côtés du théâtre, et les trois autres sur le cintre' (I, 8). In Act II, after having threatened Glaucus, the ten statues which support the bronze berceau fly away, and the berceau itself sinks back into the earth. In Act III, the 'Amours' who appeared with Venus in her 'globe', 's'envolent de tous côtés' (III, 9). It is specified in the livre de

sujet that these are twelve in number, and that as they 'partent dans le même instant ... la plupart d'entre eux ayant volé presque jusque sur terre, se relèvent tout d'un coup par un mouvement extraordinaire, pour se perdre dans les 'airs' (p. 36). In Act IV, there occurs a full scale aerial battle during which: 'Quatre esprits viennent enlever Sylla; et quand elle est au milieu de l'air, quatre Amours se détachent du haut du cintre, et après avoir combattu quelque temps les esprits, ils l'arrachent de leurs mains, et l'emportent dans le palais de Vénus' (IV, 5). According to the livre de sujet, this was one of the high points of the whole production: 'C'est dans ce combat, où l'on ne saurait assez admirer l'incomparable génie de celui qui a daigné donner ses soins à trouver les moyens de l'exécuter. On l'avait proposé d'abord comme impossible, et il a fait voir que rien ne le saurait être à ses moindres applications' (p. 36). This, no doubt, refers to the Marquis de Sourdéac, as must Thomas's praise of the machines and their anonymous maker in the introduction to the livre de sujet: 'La diversité des machines, et l'inconcevable mouvement des vols qui se font dans tous les actes, ont quelque chose de si surprenant, qu'on sera aisément convaincu que l'exécution n'en peut partir que du plus sublime génie qui se soit jamais appliqué à ces sortes de connaissances'. The final flight to be found in Circé occurs in Act V when Palémon, the confidant of Glaucus and a sea god like his master, but who throughout the play has given no sign of possessing supernatural powers, suddenly declares: 'Adieu, je vais trouver mon maître; / Juge par-là de ce qu'il est', and flies off (V, 4).

Not surprisingly, the operation of stage machinery and the performance of flights of this type were extremely hazardous occupations, and on several occasions members of the company of Circé were injured while carrying out their duties. The first reference to

occur in the Guénégaud Registres to an incident of this kind is found on 24 March 1675, just a week after the play had opened, when 3 livres were spent 'pour des chaises pour des blessés' (R II, 142). On the reverse of this page, it is noted that 12 livres had been paid 'au nommé Templier, ouvrier, qui a été blessé au service de la compagnie', and on 11 June 1675, 12 livres were paid 'au chirugien pour avoir pansé Templier' (R III, 21). Templier was one of the 'manoeuvres à 20 sols' employed by the company. Five days later, on 29 March 1675, another incident seems to have occurred, for 4 livres 10 sols are recorded as having been given to 'Toubel qui est tombé à Sylla' (R II, 144). There were, in fact, two Toubels in the Circé company, Toubel l'aîné and François, both 'grands voleurs' receiving 1 livre per performance, and this no doubt refers to an accident which occurred at the moment when Scylla was being carried off by four 'esprits', only to be rescued by four 'amours'.³⁴ Toubel was apparently ill for some months following his accident, for on 19 May 1675, a further 5 livres 14 sols were awarded by the Guénégaud company 'à Toubel malade' (R III, 12). On the reverse of the page dated 29 March 1675, it is noted that 11 livres had been given 'au petit amour blessé', although we have no information as to whether this injury occurred as a result of the accident mentioned above or on a separate occasion. A further 11 livres were donated 'pour le petit amour blessé' on 5 May 1675 (R III, 10). It was possibly in response to these accidents that the 'petits amours' received an increase in their wages of 5 sols each, again on 29 March 1675. Yet another accident occurred just a week later, on 5 April 1675, when 11 livres were given to Provost 'pour sa chute et pour se faire panser' (R II, 147 v^o). Provost was another of the 'grands voleurs', receiving 1 livre 10 sols per

³⁴ Lancaster is mistaken when he writes that this accident occurred 'while Scylla was undergoing metamorphosis' (History, IV, 35). This scene does not, in fact, occur in Thomas Corneille's play.

performance. On the same day, a further 12 livres were given 'au petit amour blessé', although it is not specified if this was the one who had been injured previously or another.

Dancing and acrobatics

In addition to backstage workers and 'voleurs', the Guénégaud company for the production of Circé, hired an unspecified number of sauteurs or acrobats, who as a group received 40 livres, and ten dancers or marcheurs, who each received 3 livres per performance, with the exception of La Montagne, who received 4 livres 10 sols. This may well have been because, as on other occasions, he was responsible for the choreography of the divertissements as well as appearing in them. It is interesting to compare the wages of this latter group with those of the 'voleurs', whom one would have expected to be particularly well-paid given the hazardous nature of their duties. The best paid of the 'voleurs', however, received only 1 livre 10 sols, less than half the salary of a 'marcheur', and the majority considerably less. The marcheurs, therefore, must have been highly skilled individuals, on a par with the musicians in the orchestra, the best paid of whom received only a little more.

The scenes for which the marcheurs and sauteurs were required include scene 3 of the prologue, which takes the form of an entrée of different symbolic characters, of the type most usually to be found in the court ballet of the period. La Gloire has ordered 'les plaisirs et les plus beaux arts' to assemble:

Et par leurs chansons et leurs jeux,
Marquer au plus grand Roi que le ciel ait fait naître,
Ce qu'ils doivent au soin qu'il daigne prendre d'eux.

When the gods who have appeared in the prologue withdraw into the temple which forms its décor:

... la musique sort d'un des côtés du théâtre, avec un livre de tablature à la main; elle est suivie des arts, tant libéraux que mécaniques, qui sont l'agriculture avec un habit couvert d'épis d'or, et tenant une bêche; la navigation, vêtue d'un tafetas de Chine, à la manière des matelots; l'orfèverie, chargée de chaines d'or et de pierreries; la peinture, tenant une palette et un pinceau; la guerre, une épée; la géométrie, un compas; l'astronomie, un globe; la sculpture, un ciseau. La comédie paraît de l'autre côté, tenant un masque, et accompagnée des plaisirs. La chasse qu'on met ensemble au nombre des plaisirs et des arts, se faisant voir la première vêtue de vert, et tenant un dard. La mascarade la suit bizarrement habillée, avec un cornet à la main. On voit ensuite la pêche qui tient une ligne; la paume, une raquette; le jeu des cartes; la bonne chère, un flacon d'or; et la danse, une poche. Après avoir par quelques figures, et par leurs différentes actions, donné des marques de ce qu'ils représentent, la comédie et la musique chantent ensemble....

There follows a musical dialogue between La Comédie and La Musique in which they are joined by one of the Arts, which features the refrain: 'Chantons, unissons-nous pour célébrer sa gloire'.

We should note that if the list of characters given in the stage direction above is a true reflection of what was actually shown on stage in performance, the ten marcheurs hired by the Guénégaud company would not have been sufficient to represent all fifteen Arts and Plaisirs. They must, therefore, have been supplemented by other assistants. Given the number and apparently sumptuous nature of the costumes required for the marcheurs in this divertissement, it is not surprising that M. Baraillon who provided them, instead of receiving a lump sum, was initially paid at a rate of 25 livres per performance, which appears, as we have noted, to have been transformed into a share in the production by the beginning of the 1675-6 season. The properties carried by the marcheurs to give clues as to the identity of their character, would have come under the heading of 'ustensiles', and would thus have been provided by Mme Vagnard.

The first occasion sauteurs are called for in the performance of Circé occurs in Act III, scene 2. Here Astérie, one of Circé's nymphs,

complains that, out of jealousy, the enchantress has turned her lover and his two pages into monkeys, but that they still come every day to entertain her with their acrobatic tricks. Upon her command: 'Allons, mon singe, il faut être léger', the stage direction instructs that, 'Les trois singes font ici quelques sauts'.

The marcheurs appear to have been required again in Act IV, scene 5 of Circé. Here, following the failure of her 'esprits' in their attempt to kidnap Scylla, Circé orders the Furies to 'quitter les enfers' and emerge from their 'demeures sombres'. They appear, 'suivies des plus noires divinités de l'enfer; et après avoir répondu dans le commencement de cette scène aux divers mouvements de Circé par leurs différentes actions, elles lui font connaître sur la fin, que le ciel les a mises dans l'impuissance de la venger'. Realising this, Circé dismisses them, and 'les furies disparaissent'.

It is, however, as one might expect, in the final divertissement with which Circé concludes, that the marcheurs and sauteurs are used most fully. Indeed, the reason Thomas Corneille altered the myth, and added Scylla's transformation into a sea-nymph by Neptune, was precisely to provide the opportunity to, in the words of the 'Argument', 'finir la pièce par un spectacle de réjouissance'. The spectacle must, indeed, have been great, for, with Jupiter in his palace looking on, Neptune 'sur les flots' orders 'les nymphes et les dieux des campagnes prochaines' to come forward to honour Scylla:

Et par quelque brillant spectacle,
De ce jour fortuné célébrant le miracle,
Honoré du destin les décrets souverains.
(V, 12)

Upon which:

Les Faunes, les Sylvains, les Dryades, et les autres
divinités champêtres, se mêlent ensemble par différentes

figures qui sont accompagnées des chansons suivantes, dont la première fait voir, par l'exemple de Glaucus, que la froideur des eaux est un vain obstacle contre les feux de l'amour.

....

Ce chœur étant fini, les Faunes et les Sylvains témoignent de leur joie par des sauts surprenants, et les divinités de la mer accompagnées de plusieurs fleuves, donnent pareillement des marques de leur allégresse par plusieurs figures extraordinaires, ce qu'ils font à différentes reprises....

There follows another song, during the first four lines of which the water gods continue to dance. Then, 'Les Faunes et les Sylvains recommencent leurs sauts, qui sont accompagnés de postures surprenantes; et pendant qu'un chœur de divinités chante les vers suivants, les fleuves et les divinités de la mer font plusieurs figures différentes, en se mêlant avec le chœur'. Thus, Circé concludes with all the different elements with which its spectacle has been composed brought together: machines, music, singing, dancing and acrobatics.

Music and singing

While discussing the activities of the marcheurs and the sauteurs in Circé, we have already had occasion to mention certain of the musical interludes which feature in the work. The score for Circé was provided by Marc-Antoine Charpentier, who had previously collaborated with Molière following the defection of Lully, providing the score for Le Malade imaginaire. For Circé, Charpentier provided an overture, many dances, vocal solos and ensembles of up to five parts, most of which are to be found among his manuscripts. Others are listed in the livre de sujet of the work which contains the full text of all the vocal music. Of these, a few are to be found in the Airs de la comédie de Circé published in 1676.³⁵ In his introduction to the livre de sujet, Thomas Corneille wrote: 'Joignez à tant de beautés la délicatesse de la

³⁵ Hitchcock, 'Charpentier', pp. 266-7; Oeuvres, pp. 369-70.

musique, où M. Charpentier qui s'est déjà fait admirer dans les airs du Malade imaginaire, s'est en quelque sorte surpassé soi-même tant par l'agrément de la symphonie, que par la noble manière dont il a relevé toutes les paroles qui se chantent'.

For his work, Charpentier was to receive 220 livres, which was originally intended to be taken from the day's takings at the rate of 5 livres 10 sols per performance, and which was thus included in the frais ordinaires (R II, 139 ff., 144 v^o). It would appear that by 5 April 1675, however, Charpentier had still not received any of this sum, for it was recorded in the Registre on that day that 'M. Charpentier, compositeur de la musique, a demandé dix louis d'or de la troupe sur ses journées'. The troupe added: 'Il est à remarquer qu'on a joué neuf fois et que la troupe n'a retiré que cinq demi louis d'or qui font 27 livres 10 sols. Pour faire dix louis d'or, M. Dauvilliers a fourni sur son compte le surplus qui est la somme de 82 livres 10 sols' (R II, 147 ff.).

The fact that certain of Charpentier's compositions for Circé were in as many as five parts is of particular interest when we remember that by the terms of the ordonnance issued in Lully's favour on 30 April 1673, all theatrical companies were limited for their performances to two singers and six instrumentalists. Another clause of this ordonnance further stated that:

Fait S.M. très-expresses défenses à toutes les troupes de Comédiens français et étrangers établis ou qui s'établiront ci-après dans sa bonne ville de Paris, de se servir d'aucuns musiciens externes et de plus grand nombre de violons pour les entr'actes, même d'avoir aucun orchestre, ni pareillement de se servir d'aucuns danseurs; le tout à peine de désobéissance.³⁶

³⁶ Delamare, Traité, I, 474.

Since, however, the above clause imposes these restrictions only on musical entertainments performed during the entr'actes, the Guénégaud company evidently did not consider itself bound to comply where the divertissements of Circé were concerned, for, no doubt by design, these occur not between the acts but within them. Two singers or musiciens externes were, therefore, employed for the production of Circé, and a harpsichord player engaged to supplement the orchestra. It was, however, in direct contravention of this ordonnance that the troupe hired the ten 'marcheurs' who participated in the production.

The two singers employed by the Guénégaud company for the production of Circé were Mlle Bastonnet and M. Poussin. The former had previously appeared in Le Malade imaginaire at the Guénégaud, and the latter had been associated with Molière's troupe in the past, taking part in Psyché, and giving evidence in relation to the riots which disrupted one of its performances. The name of a third singer also appears in the Guénégaud Registres in connection with the production of Circé, for in March 1675 M. Gaye received 33 livres 'pour récompense' (R II, 144 v°). M. Gaye had also been associated with Molière's troupe in the past, participating in such court entertainments as the Ballet des Muses, Les Amants magnifiques, Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, and Psyché.

Musical interludes occur in every act of Circé. The prologue, as we have seen, concludes with a musical dialogue between La Musique and La Comédie in which 'Ceux des comédiens qui représentent une partie des Arts et des Plaisirs' and 'un des Arts' also participate. It would appear, therefore, that those members of the company of actors of sufficient ability, were called upon to supplement the two professionals permitted by Lully's ordonnance, and that choral work was introduced to provide variety. In Act II, scene 6, rather risqué songs are sung by two satyrs to certain of Circé's nymphs. As one of the professional singers

employed on Circé was a woman, Mlle Bastonnet, and as it is unlikely that she was called upon to sing the rôle of a lewd satyr, we can only suppose that one of the actors took this part. In fact, Charpentier's manuscript score indicates several of the singers who appeared in Circé. These can be identified as: Mlle Bastonnet (treble), Poussin, Guérin d'Estriché (alto), La Grange (tenor), Verneuil, Hubert and Gaye (bass).³⁷ It is, therefore, confirmed that members of the Guénégaud company sang alongside the professionals. This co-operation can be seen to be referred to in the text of the Prologue to Circé. In the musical dialogue between La Musique and La Comédie, La Musique complains: 'J'aimerais assez à chanter, / Mais j'ai si peu de voix qu'on ne m'entend qu'à peine' - clearly an allusion to the limitations imposed on stage music. Upon which she is joined by 'Ceux des comédiens qui représentent une partie des Arts et des Plaisirs', who sing: 'Si tu nous veux souffrir, nous pourrons t'en prêter'.

In Act II, the musical interlude occurs in scene 8 and consists of another dialogue, this time between Silvie and Tircis, on the theme of love as a 'Douce peine! Agréable martyre!'. Little attempt is made in the text of the play to integrate this divertissement into the rest of the work. It is presented as an entertainment for Circé, who comments to Glaucus:

La voix
M'a toujours fort touchée. Écoutons je vous prie;
Vous me direz le reste une autre fois.

Rather more care is taken to explain its inclusion in the livre de sujet, which comments: 'Circé se trouble, et pour cacher son désordre, se servant du prétexte de quelques voix qu'elle est bien aise d'entendre, elle laisse chanter le dialogue suivant' (p. 27).

³⁷ Hitchcock, Oeuvres, p. 369.

One of the requirements of music in a machine play was that it had to cover the noise of scene changes and the operation of machines. Thus, in Act III, scene 8 of Circé we find the following stage direction: 'Tandis que Vénus descend dans ce magnifique palais, on chante les paroles suivantes'. There follows a song beginning: 'Viens, ô mère d'Amour, viens recevoir nos vœux'. The musical interlude in Act IV is introduced in scene 4, when, as if by accident, a dryad wanders onto the stage while singing to herself. On seeing Circé and Scylla, she attempts to withdraw, but is prevented from doing so by the enchantress who begs her to continue her song. The dryad is then joined by a faun, and there ensues another musical dialogue on the theme of constancy and fickleness in love.

As one might expect, it was in the final divertissement with which Circé closes that the musical element was perhaps the most important. Interspersed with the dancing and acrobatics of assorted fauns, dryads, sylvains, river and sea-gods, we find songs sung by a sylvain and by a sylvain and a dryad together, and, as a finale, a 'choeur de divinités' declaring:

Les plaisirs sont de tous les âges,
Les plaisirs sont de toutes les saisons.

RECEPTION AND REPERCUSSIONS

Unfortunately, we have no detailed contemporary account of a performance of Circé. In a letter to his elder brother dated 24 June 1675, Pierre Bayle, who had attended a performance the night before, wrote that 's'il était permis à la troupe de Molière de représenter avec musique et danse et les instruments selon leur fantaisie, Circé déferait hautement tous les opéras qui se sont joués jusqu'ici'³⁸ - an

³⁸ In Mélése, Répertoire, p. 161.

interesting indication that even in so sumptuous a production, the limitations imposed to favour Lully were seen to be restrictive. Nor do we know how the play was cast, although in La Fameuse comédienne, Mlle Molière is described in the rôle of Circé.

At the time of the production of Circé, Le Mercure galant had temporarily ceased publication. De Visé does, however, mention the play, which he describes as 'une superbe pièce à machines', in his obituary of Thomas Corneille of January 1710, claiming that he was responsible for the divertissements - a claim which may well have some basis in fact. In this article, De Visé describes the extraordinary success enjoyed by Circé:

Il est à remarquer que pendant les six premières semaines, la salle de la comédie se trouva toute remplie dès midi; et que comme l'on n'y pouvait trouver de place on donnait un demi louis d'or à la porte, seulement pour y avoir entrée, et que l'on était content quand pour la même somme que l'on donnait aux premières loges, on était placé au troisième rang. (p. 286)

Certainly, takings at the first performances of Circé in 1674-5, were extraordinarily high, ranging from 2,415 livres on 5 April 1675 to 2,775 livres on 31 March, and this in a season when the average day's takings were 605 livres 5 sols, and the average excluding performances of Circé was 470 livres 10 sols. Similarly the following season, 1676-7, the average takings at a performance of Circé were 723 livres 15 sols, whereas for other works the average was 657 livres.

Circé was performed nine times in 1674-5, and a total of sixty-seven times in 1675-6, between April and October 1675, with the last performance being given on 15 October 1675. De Visé is, therefore, guilty of understatement when he writes: 'Le succès de cette pièce fut si prodigieux qu'elle fut jouée sans interruption depuis le commencement du Carême jusqu'au mois de septembre'. These performances were not,

however, uninterrupted. Given that at only six of its seventy-six performances the takings from Circé dropped below 500 livres, it might seem strange that Circé was taken off when it was. De Visé, however, offers an explanation for this too, writing that, 'les représentations en auraient encore duré plus longtemps si les intérêts d'un particulier n'en eussent point fait retrancher les voix' - no doubt a reference to Lully.³⁹

We have seen that Lully had had it stipulated on 30 April 1673, that theatrical companies might use no more than six instrumentalists and two vocalists on their productions, and that they might not employ any dancers or 'se servir d'aucuns musiciens externes et de plus grand nombre de violons pour les entr'actes', but that the Guénégaud troupe had ignored these limitations, employing for Circé seven musicians and three professional singers, as well as ten marcheurs. Lully, however, was evidently not a man to allow his interests to be threatened, for, just four days after Circé had opened, on 21 March 1675, a new ordonnance was issued in his favour which stated that:

S.M. ayant été informé qu'au préjudice de son ordonnance du 30^e jour d'avril 1673, qui fait défenses à tous comédiens de se servir de musiciens externes, quelques-uns ne laissent pas de faire chanter sur leur théâtre des musiciens, qu'ils prétendent n'être pas externes, sous prétexte qu'ils sont à leurs gages, et empêchent par ce moyen que les ouvrages du sieur Lully, surintendant de la musique de la chambre de S.M., ne puissent avoir tout le succès qu'on en doit attendre; à quoi voulant pourvoir, S.M. a ordonné, veut et entend que ladite ordonnance du 30^e jour d'avril 1673, soit exécutée selon sa forme et teneur; ce faisant, permet auxdits comédiens de se servir de deux comédiens de leur troupe seulement pour chanter sur le théâtre, et leur fait très expresses défenses de se servir d'aucuns musiciens externes, ou qui soient à leurs gages, à peine de désobéissance.⁴⁰

³⁹ Mercure galant (January 1710), pp. 285-6.

⁴⁰ Delamare, Traité, I, 475.

Prior to the issuing of this ordonnance, and possibly in anticipation of it, Hubert made a journey to Saint-Germain-en-Laye, for which he received expenses, and for which the carriage was provided by the cocher, La Brie (R II, 143 v°, 147 ff.). After its publication, the Guénégaud company apparently reacted in its habitual fashion when under threat, and attempted to mobilize patrons at Court and elsewhere on its behalf. Thus, in July 1675, trips were made to Versailles, Saint-Germain-en-Laye and to see M. Duché, and others were made by Mlle Molière to unspecified destinations (R III, 38-40, 42). In August 1675, three carriage journeys were made on behalf of the company, as were two by chaise the following month (R III, 44, 70). What is more, it would appear that they were successful in at least delaying the bringing into of effect of the terms laid down in the ordonnance, for, despite the force of its expression, it appears to have been ignored by the Guénégaud company. Performances of Circé continued, and, as we have seen, rather than there having been a fall in the frais ordinaires of the production which would correspond to the dismissal of singers, supplementary musician and dancers, these, in fact, rose. On the other hand, Pierre Bayle's comment indicates that, for the performance of Circé he attended, certain restrictions were in force. These may, however, merely have been those imposed by Lully's original ordonnance. Given the evidence of the frais ordinaires, it would seem that the Guénégaud company ignored the ruling for as long as they possibly could, ceasing performances of Circé when it became impossible for them to continue to do so.

This ordonnance must have come as a very severe blow to the Guénégaud company, who had hired a theatre specifically suited for the production of machine plays in which music played a vital part, and who were financially committed to such productions as a result of their act

of association with the two machinistes, Sourdéac and Champeron. It was, therefore, as a result of this ordonnance, in addition to the unpleasant events surrounding the production of Circé and their general behaviour, that the troupe took the decision to rid themselves of their two unwanted and now redundant associates, and so began their long legal battle to that end. Henceforth, the history of the machine play at the Guénégaud was to consist of attempts to satisfy the public's predilection for spectacle without contravening the terms of the royal ordonnance, attempts to persuade the King to change his mind as at the time of the production of Le Triomphe des dames, and, ultimately, attempts to find alternative forms of production, leading to the introduction of more and more tragedies into the repertory.

CHAPTER NINE - THE DECLINE OF THE MACHINE PLAY

MUSIC IN THE MACHINE PLAY

Plays including a degree of spectacle and hence necessitating the use of stage machinery were to be seen on the French stage from the earliest years of the seventeenth century.¹ In the view of Christian Delmas, however, tragédie à machines proper only came into being in 1648, as a nationalistic response to the Italian operas introduced into France by Mazarin: La Finta pazza (1645), Orfeo (1647), Le Nozze di Peleo et di Theti (1654), and, after the cardinal's death, Ercole amante (1662).² Thus, the first true French tragédie à machines would have been Pierre Corneille's Andromède, written in 1648, but not performed until 1650.³ Other new works which can be said to have belonged to this new genre include Claude Boyer's Ulysse dans l'île de Circé (1648), the first such première to be given; Gabriel Gilbert's Les Amours de Diane et d'Endymion (1657); Pierre Corneille's La Conquête de la Toison d'or (1660); Claude Boyer's Les Amours de Jupiter et de Sémélé and La Fête de Vénus (1666 and 1669); and De Visé's Les Amours de Vénus et d'Adonis, Les Amours du Soleil and Le Mariage de Bacchus et d'Ariane (1670, 1671

¹ See Etienne Gros, 'Les Origines de la tragédie lyrique et la place des tragédies en machines dans l'évolution du théâtre vers l'opéra', Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France, 35 (1928), pp. 161-93 (pp. 163-76); Christian Delmas, 'Présentation', in Recueil de tragédies à machines sous Louis XIV (1652-1672) (Toulouse, 1985), n.p.

² Delmas, Mythologie, pp. 55, 77. It is also sometimes argued that machine plays were introduced in France with the production of Desmarets's Mirame at the Palais-Cardinal in 1641. According to Deierkauf-Holsboer, however, in the production of these works, 'La machinerie théâtrale n'avait rien de particulièrement nouveau; un lever de soleil, un lever de lune, la mer dans l'éloignement chargée de navires et quelques vols', and 'elle n'avait rien de comparable à celle des pièces italiennes à machines, qui ont été représenté quelques années plus tard à Paris' (Marais, II, 62-3).

³ Pierre Corneille, Andromède, p. xi.

and 1672).⁴ In addition, a number of older works were revived with the inclusion of supplementary spectacular effects. These were, in 1647-8, a Délivrance d'Andromède, probably an adaptation of a ballet intermède of 1624; Chapoton's La Descente d'Orphée aux enfers of 1640, re-entitled La Grande Journée des machines ou le Mariage d'Orphée et d'Eurydice; and Rotrou's Les Sosies of 1637, re-entitled La Grande Journée de la machine de la naissance d'Hercule. They were followed by Le Grand Astyanax ou le héros de la France (1656), possibly adapted from Sallebray's La Troade; and the latter's Jugement de Paris (1657), with the addition of more than twenty flights. Other works closely linked with the machine play include Quinault's Comédie sans comédie (1655), a form of introduction to the various theatrical genres of the period, Act V of which is devoted to the machine play; Molière's Amphitryon (1668), and his tragédie-ballet, Psyché (1671), on which he was assisted by Pierre Corneille. Nor should we forget the various versions of Le Festin de pierre by Dorimond (1658), Villiers (1659), Molière (1665) and Rosimond (1669).⁵

Delmas defines the newly formed 'genre spécifiquement français de la tragédie à machines' as:

... <la> transposition de l'opéra italien dans le cadre de la tragédie. Si elle retient de l'opéra, outre l'usage du livret explicatif, son prologue à la louange du roi et le principe des changements de décors, d'apparitions machinées et de divertissements musicaux, elle assure une totale prééminence à la parole parlée, excluant toute forme de danse, réduisant à un rôle ornamental les décors ainsi que la musique, cantonnée à ces pauses de l'action que constitue l'arrivée de machines dans les airs.⁶

⁴ Delmas, Mythologie, p. 77.

⁵ Delmas, 'Présentation', n.p.

⁶ Ibid.

This reduction of the musical content of his work is an aspect stressed by Pierre Corneille in his 'Argument' to Andromède, where he is also careful to point out that the inclusion of stage spectacle in no way diminishes the unity of his tragedy:

Vous trouverez ... que chaque acte aussi bien que le prologue a sa décoration particulière, et du moins une machine volante avec un concert de musique, que je n'ai employée qu'à satisfaire les oreilles des spectateurs, tandis que leurs yeux sont arrêtés à voir descendre ou remonter une machine, ou s'attachent à quelque chose qui leur empêche de prêter attention à ce que pourraient dire les acteurs, comme fait le combat de Persée contre le monstre: mais je me suis bien gardé de faire rien chanter qui fût nécessaire à l'intelligence de la pièce, parce que communément les paroles qui se chantent étant mal entendues des auditeurs, pour la confusion qu'y apporte la diversité des voix qui les prononcent ensemble, elles auraient fait une grande obscurité dans le corps de l'ouvrage, si elles avaient eu à instruire l'auditeur de quelque chose d'important. Il n'en va pas de même des machines, qui ne sont pas dans cette tragédie comme des agréments détachés, elles en font le noeud et le dénouement, et y sont si nécessaires que vous n'en sauriez retrancher aucune, que vous ne fassiez tomber tout l'édifice.⁷

Nevertheless, in addition to incidental music, the use of which was not noted in either the Dessein or the text, Pierre Corneille included at least one and occasionally two interludes of vocal music in each Act of Andromède. This was not the case for Boyer's Ulysse dans l'île de Circé, produced in the year following the composition of Andromède, which contained only two songs: a concert of sirens in Act I, scene 8, and Circé's song in Act IV, scene 6.⁸ Nor was vocal music any more important in Gilbert's Les Amours de Diane et d'Endimion of 1657, which similarly included only two songs: a chorus of 'Amours' in Act I, scene 1, and the song of Apollo in Act II, scene 5. Curiously, considering his protestations at the time of Andromède, Pierre

⁷ Pierre Corneille, Oeuvres complètes, edited by Georges Couton (Paris, 1980-), II, 447.

⁸ Clara Brody, The Works of Claude Boyer (New York, 1947), p. 116.

Corneille's La Conquête de la toison d'or of 1660 contains more musical interludes than either of the machine plays by other authors previously mentioned: a song in each Act with the exception of Act IV.

Six years later, the production of a work which has been described as 'perhaps the most ambitious play of the century',⁹ Boyer's Les Amours de Jupiter et de Sémélé, marked a significant change in the rôle assigned to music in the machine play. Influenced, no doubt, by the success enjoyed on the Parisian stage by Molière's comédie-ballets, originally written for court entertainment (Les Fâcheux, 1661; Le Mariage forcé and La Princesse d'Elide, 1664; L'Amour médecin, 1665), instead of assigning to music the purely utilitarian function of covering the noise of the scene changes, Boyer chose to present it as one of his work's chief attractions. The machiniste employed by the Marais company who presented Les Amours de Jupiter et de Sémélé was Denis Buffequin, who was also apparently the author of the play's livre de sujet, the Dessein de la tragédie des Amours de Jupiter et de Sémélé.¹⁰ In his introduction to this work, Buffequin speaks of 'la composition de la musique faite par ordre du Roi, et par un des plus grands génies du royaume', and 'l'excellence et la diversité des airs'; and in his conclusion he praises the score as 'ce que la musique a de plus savant et de plus agréable' (pp. 3-4, 16). This score was the work of Louis Mollier.¹¹

The increased importance attached to the musical content of Les Amours de Jupiter et de Sémélé is perceived most clearly in the prologue featuring Apollo and the three Muses, Thalie, Melpomène and Euterpe.

⁹ Lancaster, History, III, 509.

¹⁰ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, II, 157. The Dessein is reproduced by Delmas in his Recueil.

¹¹ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, II, 159.

Here, for the first time, we find in the Dessein detailed references to the instrumental accompaniment of a scene, rather than just to the vocal interventions. For example, as each of the Muses appears or is flown onto the stage, it is to a musical accompaniment considered appropriate to her character: Melpomène to 'grands bruits de clairons et de trompettes', Thalie to 'un concert de violons, qui jouent un air fait exprès pour marquer le caractère d'une Muse enjouée', and Euterpe 'au son des musettes et des hautbois' (p. 5). Similarly, when Apollo appears in the heavens, 'sa venue est célébrée par un admirable concert de tous les instruments des Muses, pour faire voir qu'il en est le maître' (p. 6). As the three Muses are disputing their theatrical pre-eminence, Apollo, to settle the matter, makes them each in turn present their case in song. Here, Buffequin in his Dessein, while reiterating Pierre Corneille's comments as to the unintelligibility of words accompanied by music, makes a virtue out of having to reproduce them for the benefit of his audiences: 'parce que les vers qu'on chante sont ordinairement mal entendus, on a cru qu'il serait à propos de les mettre ici, afin qu'on pût mieux juger de l'excellence des airs, par la conformité qu'ils ont avec le sens des paroles' (p. 6).

Other vocal music in Les Amours de Jupiter et de Sémélé includes a dialogue for two Hours in Act I, scene 1, to 'un air admirable' (p. 7); a song by Venus in Act III, scene 2, and one by Jupiter in Act V, scene 3, while each is descending from the heavens; and a further song by Jupiter in Act V, scene 9, while appearing in his palace. Another song, this time by a group of shepherds greeting the descent of Juno, features in Act III, scene 4. In the Dessein, it is described how, 'Les bergers à même temps mêlant leurs voix à leurs instruments, chantent un hymne en la commençant avec une harmonie précipitée, qui marque admirablement bien le besoin et l'empressement d'une troupe alarmée' (pp. 10-1). This

is of particular interest in that it would seem to indicate that a number of instrumentalists were present on-stage in addition to the chorus of singers. An examination of the musical requirements of these machine plays, therefore, leads one to call into question the previously mentioned La Grange's (assertion) in his Registre (made by) that, prior to the production of Psyché, singers would not consent to appear on-stage in the same way as actors, but were positioned in special boxes (I, 125-6).

Les Amours de Jupiter et de Sémélé was innovative in one more respect, and it is here that the influence of Molière's comédie-ballets can most clearly be seen. For the first time, a machine play included not only musical interludes, but also dancing in the form of entrées de ballet. At the end of the Prologue, 'Les Fureurs poétiques apparaissent et dansent une entrée de ballet'; in Act III, scene 3, an entrée is danced for Sémélé's entertainment by Les Plaisirs, La Jeunesse and two 'Amours'; and in Act IV, scene 10, four 'fantômes' dance. Of the second, Buffequin wrote in his Dessein that, like the music, it was the work of 'un des meilleurs maîtres du royaume' (p. 12). According to Deierkauf-Holsboer, this was Antoine Desbrosses, who was later to be associated with the Guénégaud company.¹²

Ballet played a still greater part in Boyer's next machine play, La Fête de Vénus of 1669 which was described as a 'pastorale avec musique et ballets'. Here, the Prologue included a dance 'des esclaves de l'Amour avec les Amours qui les tiennent enchaînés'. At the end of Act I, Mercure danced 'un ballet entrée' with Amours and the Graces. Act II, scene 4 featured a dance of shepherds; and Act IV, scene 3, one of women and Sylvains. These balletic interludes were, of course, closely linked with the vocal and instrumental music to be found within the

¹² Ibid.

play. The Prologue celebrating the end of the War of Devolution featured La Paix lounging in a wood of palm, olive and laurel trees to the sound of violas and flutes, where she was joined by La Victoire who sang as she descended from the heavens, her arrival having been announced by trumpets. Other vocal music included a chorus of shepherds in Act II, scene 4, and a song by Diotime in Act IV, scene 3.¹³

Of these two works, Les Amours de Jupiter et de Sémélé enjoyed a considerable success. The King and the Court attended a performance on 11 January 1666,¹⁴ thereby giving Boyer the opportunity to mention in his Dedication his play's good fortune 'd'avoir amusé agréablement le plus grand Roi du monde'. Fifteen years later, in 1681, De Visé was able to write that no-one had forgotten 'cette belle pièce en machines'. Les Amours de Jupiter et de Sémélé was revived by the Marais troupe in 1666-7 and 1667-8.¹⁵ Similarly, Boyer was able to note in his Dedication of La Fête de Vénus to Henriette d'Angleterre, that the performances of his work had been a great success in Paris.¹⁶

Given this success of works with such a high content of music and dancing, it is curious that both were virtually eliminated from the next two machine plays to be presented by the Marais company, De Visé's Les Amours de Vénus et d'Adonis (1670), and Les Amours du Soleil (1671). The text of the first calls for only two sound effects: horns in Act I and trumpets in Act II; and none at all are required by the second. Both would, however, almost certainly have featured incidental music in performance. 1671, the year of the production of Les Amours du Soleil, saw the return to the forefront of music as an attraction in theatrical

¹³ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, II, 171-2, Gros; 'Origines', pp. 188-9.

¹⁴ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, II, 159.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 160.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 172.

performances. On 3 March of that year, the first performance was given of Perrin and Cambert's opera, Pomone, and 24 July 1671 saw the first public performance of Molière and Pierre Corneille's spectacular tragédie-ballet, Psyché. It was in response to the popularity enjoyed by these works, that De Visé dramatically increased the musical and balletic content of his next machine play, Le Mariage de Bacchus et d'Ariane, given in January 1672. This is made clear in the introduction to the work's livre de sujet, entitled Sujet des Amours de Bacchus et d'Ariane, comédie-héroïque:

Comme nous sommes dans un siècle où la musique et les ballets ont des charmes pour tout le monde, et que les spectacles qui en sont remplis sont beaucoup plus suivis que les autres; l'auteur des Amours du Soleil, dont les machines, pendant plus de cinquante représentations, qui en ont été faites durant deux hivers, ont surpris tous ceux qui les ont vues; a voulu donner, cette année, une pièce dont la musique et les entrées eussent quelque chose d'aussi particulier que les machines de son dernier ouvrage.... (p. 1)

In fact, Le Mariage de Bacchus et d'Ariane included more music and dancing than any machine play seen so far on the Parisian stage. Descriptions of these entertainments are given in great detail in the works' livre de sujet. The Prologue features a sung dialogue between two inhabitants of Naxos, and two dances, each to a different tune, in the first of which the participants 'se font, même en dansant, des couronnes avec les branches qu'ils tiennent' (p. 3). In Act I:

Bacchus et Comus, dieu des festins, sortent au son des timbales, et des trompettes de ce navire où l'on ne voit que de l'or ou de la verdure. Ils sont accompagnés des satyres, corybantes, tityres, sylvains, cabyres, égyptans, et bacchantes au nombre de soixante et dix: tenant tous ou des tirsés ou des instruments différents.... <Bacchus> s'arrête au milieu du théâtre ayant Comus auprès de lui.... Ceux de sa suite qui jouent des instruments se rangent des deux côtés du théâtre. Ils ont des flûtes, hautbois, saqueboutes, nasards, cornets à bouquin, chalumeaux, musettes, flageolets, tambours, cornets d'airain, cimbales, niacres, et autres sortes d'instruments.... Les danseurs qui font un double

rang de chaque côté,¹⁷ au-devant des joueurs d'instruments, prennent le milieu du théâtre, et dansent au son des violons auxquels le chœur des instruments se mêle quelquefois: ce qui forme un concert si nouveau et si surprenant qu'on n'a jamais ouï de pareil. (pp. 5-6)

There follow a song by one of the follower's of Bacchus, another entrée de ballet, and a song by Cupid. Finally, after scenes in which Bacchus reveals his love for Ariane and is rejected by her, she and her confidente are forced to retire:

... étant interrompue(s) par tous ceux de la suite de Bacchus qui ayant visité les vignes de l'île, et bu de ses bons vins en paraissent beaucoup plus gais, et qui échauffés par les vapeurs du vin, font une danse surprenante par ses figures et qui marque une partie des emportements dont nous parlent ceux qui ont décrit les bacchanales.... Entre les deux airs sur lesquels cette entrée est faite, deux de la suite de Bacchus accompagnés d'une petite bacchante chantent ensemble.... (p. 7)

In the following Act, a song is sung in honour of Ariane. The followers of Bacchus, while dancing, build a bower of flowers and vegetation, which Cupid invites her to enter. She is then entertained by the dancers, who, after her departure, demolish the bower piece by piece as they had constructed it (pp. 8-10).¹⁸

The third and final act concludes as one might expect with an elaborate spectacle. The followers of Bacchus enter, 'au son de tous les instruments; et le théâtre est rempli de près de quatre-vingts personnes' (p. 11). Jupiter and Juno appear on the upper stage level in their palace, with Cupid between them, and, hovering above them, two 'Amours' supporting the crown of jewels given to Bacchus by Venus. Thus, in the words of the livre de sujet, 'la vue est occupée à voir en même

¹⁷ In the 'fautes à corriger' included at the end of the livre de sujet, this is amended to 'un triple rang'.

¹⁸ An error in pagination in the edition reproduced in the Recueil gives pp. 10 and 11 as pp. 2 and 3.

temps, ces trois différents spectacles pendant que les oreilles ne sont pas moins diverties' - an indication that incidental music was, indeed, used in spectacular productions without it being explicitly stated in the text. The members of Bacchus's suite dance to indicate their joy at their master's forthcoming wedding, 'et admirent en dansant, et le palais de Jupiter, et la couronne qu'ils voient dans le ciel' (p. 12). A nymph sings a gavotte, 'les satyres, pans, égyfans, bacchantes et corybantes dansent'; the nymph sings a saraband, then 'un des plus illustres danseurs de France danse une sarabande' (pp. 13-4). At Jupiter's order, the crown supported by the two 'Amours' is transformed into stars, upon which, 'toute la suite de Bacchus, revêtue d'habits tous différents fait voir son étonnement par une danse nouvelle.... Tous les instruments se mêlent, et la pièce finit' (p. 14).

The livre de sujet concludes by praising the individuals involved in the production of the work. Of the composer, who remains anonymous, it is said, 'qu'il a l'honneur d'appartenir au Roi; qu'il a souvent travaillé à ses divertissements, qu'il estime son mérite, et en a souvent parlé avec éloges' (p. 14). The choreographer was again Desbrosses, 'qui a souvent eu l'honneur aussi de travailler pour divertir Sa Majesté, et depuis fort peu de temps, il en a reçu des louanges devant toute la Cour'. The singers were, 'les belles voix qui vous ont tant plu dans les représentations de Psyché',¹⁹ and the reader is particularly informed that 'la jeune demoiselle qui y chantait dans le dialogue des Amours et des Zéphyrs, et qui vous a tant charmé y paraîtra dans plus d'un habit, et vous fera connaître qu'elle est capable de chanter toutes sortes d'airs' (p. 15).

¹⁹ For the public performances given in Paris these were: Mlles Rieux, Turpin and Grandpré, and MM. Forestier, Mosnier, Champenois, Ribon, and Poussin (La Grange, Registre, I, 126).

From the above it is clear that, by 1672, music had come to be an all important ingredient in spectacular productions. From 1648 onwards, all machine plays had had some musical content, most frequently songs and instrumental pieces to cover the noise of the scene changes and the operation of the stage machinery. This would have become more elaborate with the introduction of dance sequences, following the example of Molière's comédie^S-ballets, until, finally, with the production of Le Mariage de Bacchus et d'Ariane, and following the example of the newly-established Opera, the singing and dancing were so increased in importance as to become one of the chief attractions of such spectacular productions. It is not surprising, therefore, that when the ambitious and enterprising Lully took control of the Académie de Musique, he should have taken steps to ensure that works in a genre so similar to his own, became to all intents and purposes impossible to perform, and thus contributed to the demise of the Marais company.

CIRCE

The popular passion for spectacle which had ensured the success of the machine play at the Marais theatre still, however, remained as a force available to be exploited by the actors of the Guénégaud company, despite Lully's attempts to channel it entirely to his own use. Hence the introduction into the Guénégaud repertory of works with minor elements of spectacle in the first season of the troupe's activity, and, finally, the production of Circé. It is some measure of the tenacity with which the majority of the company believed that it was only through the presentation of spectacle that they could achieve any measure of success, that they overcame the opposition from others of their number that we have seen. It is also an indication of the importance of music and dancing to the presentation of spectacle that they chose to ignore as far as possible the ordonnance issued in Lully's favour, employing

singers and dancers as well as a supplementary musician. The necessity of music is also indicated by the fact that, according to De Visé, when the use of external musicians was denied them, they were forced to take the play off. This is clearly a far remove from the days when De Visé's two earlier machine plays, Les Amours de Vénus et d'Adonis and Les Amours du Soleil, had been able to score a significant success with the public with only a limited musical accompaniment.

In his 'Présentation' of the works included in his Recueil de tragédies à machines sous Louis XIV, Christian Delmas describes Circé as 'aberrante', without explanation. I would contend, however, that, thematically at least, it is a direct continuation of the machine play as it had developed from 1648 onwards. Like the majority of those earlier works, Circé is on a mythological subject, it possesses a prologue dedicated to the greater glory of Louis XIV,²⁰ and its principal attractions are its sumptuous, changing décors, its flights and flying machines, and its interludes of vocal and instrumental music, enhanced by the addition of a company of dancers. In his introduction to his work's livre de sujet, Thomas Corneille presents Circé as the summum

²⁰ As Reynier rightly remarks (p. 271), here 'la flatterie paraît jusque dans le décor', for this consists of a temple of which:

Le haut ... est fini par un attique où se voit un buste de héros directement au-dessus de chaque milieu des chapiteaux. Les supports des colonnes sont des piédestaux qui représentent une partie des conquêtes du Roi, et les superbes bâtiments qui se sont faits, ou qui ont été embellis sous son règne. Au-dessus de chaque piédestal, il y a différentes figures peintes en saillies et isolées, qui toutes, ainsi que les bustes, représentent par leurs attributs, ou les vertus particulières que possède cet auguste monarque, ou les arts qu'il prend soin de faire fleurir.... Vers le milieu du temple s'élève une manière d'arc triomphal, soutenu par huit colonnes d'ordre ionique, avec une espèce d'attique au-dessus de la corniche où le Roi est représenté. La Victoire et La Gloire sont à ses côtés, dont l'une lui présente une couronne, et l'autre une branche de laurier, le tout de marbre blanc.

of all the machine play has to offer, and states that this is deliberate, it being the desire of the Guénégaud company to honour the King to the utmost of their ability, as well as to impose themselves by a display of the spectacle of which they are capable:

Les grandes conquêtes du Roi, et les importantes victoires qu'il a remportés sur ses ennemis, ayant mis la gloire de la France au plus haut point où elle ait jamais été, tout le monde a tâché à l'envie d'en témoigner sa joie en différentes occasions ou par des réjouissances particulières, ou par des divertissements publics. C'est ce qui a donné lieu à ces admirables feux d'artifice qui ont attiré tout Paris les années dernières et ce qui le donne encore aujourd'hui aux comédiens de la Troupe du Roi, de tâcher à signaler leur zèle par tout ce que la scène est capable de produire de merveilleux. L'honneur qu'il a plu à S.M. de leur faire, en donnant ses ordres pour leur rétablissement, les mettait dans une continuelle impatience de faire voir qu'ils conservent toujours la même ardeur de pouvoir être jugés dignes de contribuer à ses plaisirs; et c'est dans cette vue qu'ils ont mis tous leurs soins à rendre Circé le spectacle le plus pompeux qui ait paru jusqu'ici sur nos théâtres. Tout y est grand, tout y est extraordinaire; et si j'avais pu répondre par la force des pensées et par la majesté des vers, aux superbes ornements qu'on m'a prêtés, je pourrais dire sans trop de présomption, qu'on n'aurait point encore vu d'ouvrage plus achevé.

One could, in fact, suggest that by his choice of subject Thomas Corneille was clearly situating his work in relation to what had gone before. Jean Rousset in his study of La Littérature de l'âge baroque en France: Circé et le paon, explains his subtitle thus:

Le premier soin de cette enquête sera d'établir que toute une époque, qui va approximativement de 1580 à 1670, de Montaigne au Bernin, se reconnaît à une série de thèmes qui lui sont propres: le changement, l'inconstance, le trompe-l'oeil et la parure, le spectacle funèbre, la vie fugitive et le monde en instabilité; on les voit incarner en deux symboles exemplaires: Circé et le Paon, c'est-à-dire la métamorphose et l'ostentation, le mouvement et le décor.²¹

²¹ Jean Rousset, La Littérature de l'âge baroque en France: Circé et le paon (Paris, 1954), p. 8.

He goes on to list some of the court ballets in which the character of Circé appeared,²² of which possibly the best-known example is the work which is frequently held up as the precursor of the genre of the tragédie à machines as, indeed, of opera - Balthasar de Beaujoyeulx's Le Ballet comique de la Reine of 1581.²³ Indeed, Deierkauf-Holsboer suggests that this work may have been revived as late as 1647 as a manifestation of the initial reaction on the part of the French theatrical companies to the performance of Italian opera in Paris.²⁴

It is apparent that the characteristics Rousset highlights - metamorphosis, ostentation, movement, décor - are also those of the machine play. And it is no coincidence that the character of Circé and those of her fellow magicians and enchantresses, particularly Alcine and Armide, appear in so many of the works of this genre and those related to it: the ballet of La Délivrance de Renaud (1617), Charles de Lespine's Le Mariage d'Orphée (1623), Durval's Les Travaux d'Ulysse (1631), Chapoton's Le Mariage d'Orphée et d'Eurydice (1648), Boyer's Ulysse dans l'île de Circé (1648), the tragicomédie à machines concerning Armide and Renaud which forms Act V of Quinault's Comédie sans comédie (1655), Pierre Corneille's La Conquête de la Toison d'or (1660), and Les Plaisirs de l'Île enchantée (1664). As, the seventeenth century advanced and the unity of place prescribed by the classical doctrine became ever-increasingly a theatrical prerequisite, this inevitably came into conflict with the passion for spectacle which formed the motivating force behind the development of the machine play. How could a theatrical company present its audiences with the series of sumptuous décors and changements à vue they craved, when according to

²² Ibid., pp. 14-5.

²³ See Delmas, Mythologie, p. 12.

²⁴ Marais, II, 21-5.

the rules of good theatrical practice, a play had to be confined within the limits of a single location? The answer was by the introduction of the merveilleux, both magical and mythological. Indeed, the two could be said to be identical, given that, as Christian Delmas has shown, the gods of the machine play have become both 'magiciens' and 'illusionistes'.²⁵

Magic had been used as a means of breaking free of the confines of the décor unique from as early as the 1630s; one of the best-known examples being Pierre Corneille's L'Illusion comique. When it came to the machine play, the world of the magician could clearly not be expected to conform to the same rules as that of lesser mortals. Thus, in addition to the rather greater freedom in the interpretation of the rules that the writers of machine plays appear to have allowed themselves, by his powers the magician could conjure up the images of actions occurring elsewhere in time or space, and even superimpose one location upon another.²⁶ Thus, in Circé, although for the most part the action is situated in a variety of locations in and around the enchantress's palace, at the end of Act I, Glaucus is transported there by means of Circé's 'char volant' drawn by dragons, and during the course of Act V, Circé causes her palace to disappear completely leaving Glaucus standing on the sea-shore. Mythological subjects, of course, also contributed greatly to the spectacle of the machine play by allowing for the recurrent appearance on or above the stage of gods in their palaces or chariots, as well as providing scope for frequent flights - air and the heavens being the natural environment for the majority of such deities. It might, therefore, be considered appropriate that a play with Circé as its central character should have been the

²⁵ Mythologie, pp. 77-101.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 99.

last of the machine plays in the traditional mould to have been created on the Parisian stage.²⁷ However, although Thomas Corneille's one and only mythological machine play, Circé was not his last production of this kind, and as the Académie Royale de Musique had taken pains to acquire the monopoly on such works, it was for that theatre that they were created.

THE OPERAS OF THOMAS CORNEILLE

In January 1677, Isis, the fifth opera to appear as the result of the collaboration between Lully and Quinault, was given its first performance at Saint-Germain-en-Laye. This work did not enjoy the same success as their earlier efforts. Both the composer and the librettist had numerous enemies at Court, and these had little difficulty in persuading Mme de Montespan that she had served as the model for the scarcely flattering portrait of Juno. Quinault was banished from the Court, and was thus prevented from continuing his work with Lully. It became necessary, therefore, to find the composer a new librettist. The choice finally fell on Thomas Corneille, who would have appeared admirably qualified, given the success of his spectacular productions Circé and L'Inconnu for the Guénégaud. Psyché, an adaptation of the tragédie-ballet by Molière and Pierre Corneille of 1671, was given its first performance at the Académie Royale de Musique on 19 April 1678.²⁸ The second opera on which Thomas Corneille collaborated with Lully, Bellérophon, was given its première the following year, on 31 January 1679. The composition of this work was fraught with difficulties,

²⁷ There were, however, at the Comédie-Française in later years, revivals of earlier machine plays in revised forms, notably: Gilbert's Les Amours de Diane et d'Endimion, De Visé's Le Mariage de Bacchus et d'Ariane, Pierre Corneille's Andromède and Molière and Pierre Corneille's Psyché (Lancaster, History, IV, 922-3).

²⁸ See, Carlez, 'Librettistes'; Spycket, 'Thomas Corneille'.

however, and several other authors including Boileau, Quinault, and Corneille's nephew, Fontenelle, later claimed to have had a hand in it. According to De Bricqueville, 'le malheureux auteur désespérant d'en venir à bout, obligé de refaire cent fois son oeuvre au gré de l'Académie d'abord, de Lully ensuite, n'avait plus qu'à supplier le Roi de lui retirer sa commande';²⁹ and Boindin claims that Thomas was forced to write over 2,000 lines in order to be left with the five or six hundred which the work contains.³⁰ Nevertheless, Bellerophon was a great success, being performed in Paris for six months without interruption, and not least with the King, for it was performed at Court from January 1680 to the end of the Carnaval, and at each performance Louis had certain passages which particularly pleased him repeated.³¹

Notwithstanding, it was some years before Thomas Corneille was once more to attempt the operatic genre, and, when he did, his collaborator was not Lully, but the composer who had provided the music for all of his work for the Guénégaud theatre, Marc-Antoine Charpentier. On 11 December 1693, the première was given of Médée, loosely based on the tragedy by Pierre Corneille.³² Unusually, the King travelled to Paris for this first performance, but despite this support and favourable criticism, the work was soon taken off and was not revived.³³ Thus ended Thomas's career of writing for the Opera, and it is perhaps fitting that the subject of this final work should have been Médée, the sister of that other enchantress, Circé.

²⁹ Eugène H. de Bricqueville, Le Livret de l'opéra français de Lully à Gluck (Mayence, 1888), p. 30.

³⁰ Lettres historiques, p. 89.

³¹ Carlez, 'Librettistes', p. 171.

³² On Médée, see the special edition of L'Avant Scène Opéra, 68 (October 1984).

³³ Spycket, 'Thomas Corneille', p. 448.

A GENERAL SEARCH FOR SPECTACLE

We have seen that the public's passion for music and spectacle had in no way abated by 1675, and that this remained as a force to be tapped by theatrical entrepreneurs. The Académie Royale de Musique had attempted to assure itself of the monopoly on such spectacular productions. Other companies and individuals were, however, by no means prepared to relinquish the lucrative possibilities of music and spectacle without a struggle. Indeed, even the troupe of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, reputed for its performance of tragedy, included in its repertory at this time, Brécourt's L'Ombre de Molière (1674), the first scene of which contains an intermède during which 'Le théâtre s'ouvre par deux ombres, qui en dansant, apportent chacune un morceau de tout ce qui peut former un tribunal; et après l'avoir dressé, elles se disputent un balai pour nettoyer ce lieu, où Pluton se doit venir rendre bientôt'; together with Hauteroche's Crispin musicien (1674), a play which contains so much music that in the provinces it was known as 'l'Opéra de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne'.³⁴ Therefore, before moving on to consider the response of the Guénégaud company following the reinforcement of Lully's monopoly after the production of Circé, I would like to set this in context by an examination of other contemporary reactions.

Académie Royale des Spectacles

One of the first instances of an entrepreneur attempting to capitalize on the public's taste for spectacle without contravening the terms of the ordonnance issued in Lully's favour occurred in 1674. In that year, Henri Guichard, the former associate of Perrin, acting under Colbert's guidance, applied for and was awarded the privilège to

³⁴ On this work see Edward R. B. Forman, 'Music at the Comédie-Française: the opening season', Newsletter of the Society for Seventeenth Century French Studies, 3 (1981), pp. 14-20.

establish an Académie Royale de Spectacles. This stated in the King's name that:

Les spectacles publics ... ayant toujours fait les divertissements les plus ordinaires des peuples et pouvant servir à leur félicité aussi bien que le repos et l'abondance, nous ne nous contentons pas de veiller à la tranquillité de nos sujets par nos travaux et nos soins continuels, nous voulons bien y contribuer encore par des divertissements publics. C'est pourquoi nous avons agréé la très-humble supplication qui nous a été faite par notre cher et bien-aimé Henri Guichard, intendant des bâtiments et jardins de notre très-cher et très-aimé frère unique le duc d'Orléans, de lui permettre de faire construire des cirques et des amphithéâtres pour y faire des carrousels, des tournois, des courses, des joutes, des luttes, des combats d'animaux, des illuminations, des feux d'artifice et généralement tout ce qui peut imiter les anciens jeux des Grecs et des Romains.³⁵

Lully, however, believed that this new privilège would threaten his own, and appealed directly to the King. After four years of struggle, Colbert was forced to submit and wrote to instruct that the privilège should not be registered.³⁶

Les Pygmées

Another unusual attempt to circumvent Lully and satisfy the public's taste for spectacle was made by a certain La Grille, who, in 1676, established a puppet theatre in the Marais district of Paris. The four foot tall puppets were known as 'Les Pygmées' and performed a work of the same name - a form of 'opéra en musique avec ballets, machines et changements de théâtre'.³⁷ The puppets 'faisaient sur le théâtre les gestes convenables au récit que chantaient des musiciens, dont la voix

³⁵ Pierre Clément, Histoire de Colbert et de son administration, 2 vols (Paris, 1874), II, 255.

³⁶ Ibid., II, 255-6.

³⁷ Germain Bapst, Essai sur l'histoire du théâtre (Paris, 1893), p. 345.

sortait par une ouverture ménagée dans la scène'.³⁸ The text of Les Pygmées was published, and, in his introduction, the author boasted of 'les spectacles pompeux, les machines toutes surprenantes, les décorations magnifiques, les habits extrêmement propres, les agréments de musique et de danses' which it contained, promising his audience that they would see:

... des figures humaines de quatre pieds de haut, richement habillées, en très grand nombre, sur un vaste et superbe théâtre représenter des pièces en cinq actes, ornées de musique, de ballets, de machines volantes d'une invention toute nouvelle, et de changements de décorations, réciter, marcher, actionner comme des personnes vivantes, et très agréablement, sans qu'on les tienne suspendues.³⁹

One of the most interesting features of this production was the way in which the dividing line between the stage and the auditorium was broken down, so that the audience found themselves effectively seated within the décor: 'La salle entière représente un puissant rocher, percé à jour, avec plusieurs niches, à droite et à gauche, qui serviront de loges à ceux qui ne voudront pas être au parterre. La Nature semble l'avoir fait exprès pour découvrir au travers le pays enchanté des Pygmées, à servir de passage'. Attempts had been made in the machine plays of the past to escape from the confines of the stage. For example, in Act V of Boyer's Les Amours de Jupiter et de Sémélé, not only was the stage suddenly covered with clouds, but also the auditorium, so that, 'il semble que le ciel soit tombé sur terre, et que les acteurs et les spectateurs soient enfermés dans une nue',⁴⁰ Similarly, in Act IV of De Visés Les Amours du Soleil, 'un terrible tonnerre' is heard, 'non

³⁸ Charles Magnin, Histoire des marionettes en Europe (Paris, 1862), pp. 140-1.

³⁹ Les Pygmées, tragicomédie ornée de musique, d'entrées de ballet, de machines, et de changements de théâtre (Paris, 1676), n.p.

⁴⁰ Dessein, p. 16.

seulement sur le théâtre mais encore par toute la salle';⁴¹ and the same author was particularly proud of the flights his actors were able to effect over the heads of the audience, as in the prologue to Les Amours de Vénus et d'Adonis.⁴² The reduced scale of the Pygmées's stage and theatre evidently allowed this aspect of the machine play to be developed so as to create a total environment for the audience.

The Pygmées first production was so successful that the following year another was introduced: Les Amours de Microton ou les charmes d'Orcan.⁴³ Again, the spectacular nature of the work and its musical content were the attractions stressed in the introduction to its livre de sujet:

Les décorations auront des agréments si particuliers, que quand ils ne seraient pas soutenus par la diversité des pas figurés, ils mériteraient seuls d'exciter la curiosité de tout Paris: ainsi il serait difficile que la douceur des voix et la charme de la symphonie se mêlant à tant de raretés, ne forment un spectacle assez beau et assez divertissant pour être dignes de l'approbation des plus sévères critiques.

The links between this work and the machine play both in terms of form and content are clearly apparent. The décors consist for the most part of forests, mountains and gardens complete with bowers; and the central character, Orcan, is a magician complete with wand, whose charms give rise to a quantity of spectacular effects, many of which are highly reminiscent of those to be found in Circé. For example, in Act II:

Un jardin diversifié de fleurs paraît au fond du théâtre et fait une partie de la décoration de cet acte....

⁴¹ Sujet des Amours du Soleil, p. 14.

⁴² Sujet des Amours de Vénus et d'Adonis, p. 2.

⁴³ Les Amours de Microton ou les charmes d'Orcan, tragédie enjouée pastorale, mêlée d'ornements singuliers et divertissants (Paris, s.d.).

Orcan avec sa baguette fait avancer huit cyprès qui sortent de l'épaisseur du bois, et qui forment une allée avec des compartiments singuliers.

Microton se réjouit et incontinent le magicien commande aux cyprès de se changer en statues qui forment une grande allée. On ouvre la ferme, et on voit tout le jardin bordé de statues jusqu'à l'optique. Les statues dansent et chantent....

Après la chanson, les statues se rangent contre les ailes du théâtre pour l'orner; et pendant qu'Orcan et Microton s'entretiennent, les statues sont changées en jardiniers qui font une très belle entrée.

Other effects include the entrée of four magicians who transform porcelain vases into dancing figures, a fire-breathing dragon, a collation where the food turns into snakes and toads, and hell complete with flying demons. Of particular interest in connection with the history of theatre design is the fact that here, too, an upper stage level was used to facilitate certain of the special effects, as in Act V when 'on découvre une grande montagne au second théâtre', from which shepherds and shepherdesses descend playing flutes.

Here, therefore, are to be found all the elements of the machine play in miniature. It would seem likely, however, that the very nature of the enterprise would have diminished its effect. Among the chief attractions of the machine play would have been precisely its grandiose scale, hence the repeated use of perspective in stage design, together with the apparent impossibility of the effects and transformations presented, and the thrill of the dangerous flights. None of these would have been possible in a puppet production, where all is artificial and the human dimension by which the stage magic is measured is lost. Nevertheless, the Pygmées were successful, too successful in fact, for,

in a particularly bitter article in Le Mercure galant in which he refers to them as 'Bamboches',⁴⁴ De Visé comments:

... peut-être que si on les laisse croître, elles feraient parler d'elles: elles se sont déjà perfectionnées, elles ne dansent pas mal, mais elles chantent trop haut pour pouvoir chanter bien longtemps; et si on devient considérable quand on commence à se faire craindre, il faut qu'elles aient plus de mérite que le peuple de Paris ne leur en a cru: mais tout fait ombrage qui veut régner seul.... (p. 41)

Inevitably, De Visé's fears proved to be founded, for on 5 February 1677, it was forbidden for all puppeteers to use music in their performances, it being in contravention of the terms of Lully's ordonnance, so that the short-lived Théâtre des Pygmées was forced to close its doors.⁴⁵

La Troupe des Forces de L'Amour et de la Magie

As we have seen, the name of the sauteur, Alard appears in the Registres of the Guénégaud company in connection with the productions of Le Comédien poète and Le Malade imaginaire. Sauteurs also played a significant rôle in Circé, and it would seem likely that Alard was employed on this production also. Indeed, the parts may well have been written precisely on account of the association of Alard and his companions with the troupe. This introduction of acrobats into the machine play can be seen as an attempt to raise the spectacle to ever greater heights, and would appear to form a natural link between the 'figures' of the marcheurs and the aerial displays of the voleurs. With the transformation in the machine play which came about following Circé,

⁴⁴ 'Bamboche est le nom d'un fameux peintre qui ne faisait que de petites figures que les curieux appelaient des bamboches; et il fut donné depuis indifféremment à toutes les petites figures de quelque peintre qu'elles fussent' (Mercure galant (1677), p. 40).

⁴⁵ Jules Bonnassies, Les Spectacles forains et la Comédie-Française (Paris, 1875), p. 4.

however, there was no longer any scope for acrobats in those productions presented at the Guénégaud. Alard and his companions appear, therefore, to have decided to branch out on their own.

Thus, in 1678, we find Alard, together with the German Maurice Vondrebeck, at the head of a troupe composed of twenty-four acrobats performing at the Foire Saint-Germain. The work they presented there entitled ^{es}~~La~~ ^sForce de l'amour et de la magie is described as a 'divertissement comique en trois intermèdes',⁴⁶ and in it Vondrebeck and Alard appear to have taken the search for spectacle to its logical conclusion, reducing the text to a mere spoken commentary on the action.⁴⁷ Like the works performed by the Pygmées, Les Forces de l'amour et de la magie derived its chief inspiration from the pastoral and the machine play, but its composition would also appear to have been influenced by the Italian comedy, for besides the two central characters, a magician and a shepherdess, an 'arlequin' and several 'polichinelles' also appear. The following sequence, included in the second intermède, gives an illustration of the type of entertainment provided:

Le magicien fait apporter une table, et avec sa baguette fait des conjurations et des cercles; ensuite il lève trois gobelets qui sont sur cette table, les montre, et les remet et les relevant, il en sort trois singes qui font quantité de sauts et se rangent au côté du théâtre. Il reprend le gobelet du milieu, le montre et le remet et le relève, et il en sort un pâté, duquel on voit voler quantité de serpents ailés. Il donne ensuite un coup de baguette sur la table, deux démons enlèvent la table, et il paraît un nouveau démon, qui fait des sauts périlleux avec les singes....⁴⁸

⁴⁶ In Claude and François Parfaict, Mémoire pour servir à l'histoire des spectacles de la foire, 2 vols (Paris, 1743), I, 53.

⁴⁷ Albert, Théâtres de la foire, p. 6.

⁴⁸ This work has been published by Marcello Spaziani in Il Teatro della foire, dieci commedie di Alard, Fuzelier, Lesage, D'Orneval, La Font, Piron (Rome, 1965).

Here the presence of the three monkeys would appear to hint at links with Circé, while the whole structure of the scene would seem to have been inspired by the type of conjuring tricks to be found in the street theatre and fairs with which acrobatics are more often associated.

As might be expected, the acrobatics contained in Les Forces de l'amour et de la magie did not take place against a background of silence, and music and, indeed, dancing were among the work's attractions. Examples are to be found in each intermède: to open the entertainment, 'une ouverture fort agréable' was played on oboes; in the first intermède, a group of demons cause statues to move 'en faisant des pas figurés'; in the second, 'quatre sauteurs en bergers dansent une entrée.... Un danseur danse une entrée, les bergers en dansent une nouvelle, ensuite un sauteur en arlequin danse un gigue'; and in the third, '<Merlin> danse une sarabande à neuf postures'.

Of even more interest in the context of this study is a second work performed by the Forces de L'Amour et de la Magie at the Foire Saint-Germain in 1678: Circé en postures.⁴⁹ Although, clearly inspired by the success of the Guénégaud company's recent production, this work takes as its subject the arrival of Ulysses and his companions on the island of the enchantress, and, as might be expected, the possibilities of the transformation of men into animals are exploited to the full. For example, when Circé touches certain of the bewitched sailors with her wand, 'les uns quittent leur forme d'ours, et sont changés en polichinelles qui figurent; les autres, qui demeurent sous la forme de chameaux, de singes, de cerfs, et de licornes, font deux postures, l'une appelée la Force des Animaux, et l'autre la Tour'. These 'postures' of

⁴⁹ Circé en postures, récit du divertissement comique divisé en trois parties (Paris, 1678).

which there are many in this work, would appear to have been different kinds of human pyramids.

Circé en postures is different from Les Forces de l'amour et de la magie in that it relies far more on stage decoration, machinery and flights for the creation of its special effects. The work is divided into three 'parties'. In the first, the enchantress calls up her demons:

... deux démons sortent de terre, et trois autres d'une gueule d'enfer qui paraît au fond du théâtre, au milieu des tourbillons de flammes, avec des serpents et des flambeaux à la main; les uns figurent et les autres font des sauts périlleux.... <Ulysse> met l'épée à la main. Il combat les démons; Mercure descend des cieux, lui apporte le moly pour le garantir des enchantements de Circé, et chasse les démons qui disparaissent.

In the second, Circé orders her two 'folets', Sinaric and Elpenor, to call up a storm:

Les folets s'élèvent dans les nues pour exécuter les ordres de Circé.... On voit des éclairs, et on entend gronder le tonnerre.... L'on voit des monstres ramper sur terre, et voler en l'air.... Il sort des vents de terre et de tous les côtés qui figurent en différentes manières; et les folets descendent des nues après avoir exécuté les ordres de Circé.... Le fond du théâtre s'ouvre, et laisse voir un enfer d'où sortent des démons conduits par Sinaric, lesquels épouvantent Ulysse par deux postures, l'une nommée Furie d'Enfer, et l'autre le Gouffre.

The second 'partie' comes to an end as Elpenor dances a saraband, 'l'Amour descend en même temps et décoche une flèche sur Ulysse', and a group of shepherds and two fauns dance, while woodcutters 'font des postures'. Finally, to conclude the whole spectacle:

Le fond du théâtre s'ouvre, et laisse voir le temple et la statue du Soleil. Elpenor conduit les génies favorables, et Sinaric les influences heureuses, qui apportent des branches de laurier, qu'ils consacrent au Soleil, en les posant sur un autel qui avance du fonds. Les génies figurent différemment avec les branches de laurier qu'ils prennent sur l'autel, dont ils forment des allées, des arcades, et des berceaux, au milieu desquels il s'élève une fontaine. Les influences font huit postures plus surprenantes les unes

que les autres, entremêlées de sauts périlleux extraordinaires, que les génies accompagnent alternativement de différentes figures, tantôt avec des tambours de basques, tantôt avec des castagnettes, tantôt avec des Faces du Soleil, et finissent ainsi les Jeux du Soleil avec la troisième partie du divertissement comique.

It would appear clear, therefore, that in their combination of the pastoral and the magical and, in the case of Circé en postures, the mythological, as well as in their use of stage machinery and scenic effects, music and dancing, these spectacles were inspired by the machine play, and could almost be said to constitute machine plays without the play.⁵⁰

As might be expected, the activities of the Forces de l'Amour et de la Magie troupe did not go unnoticed by Lully, and he appears to have attempted to have them closed down. On this occasion he was unsuccessful, however, for the company enjoyed royal favour, performing several times before the King at Versailles, and Colbert wrote to La Reynie on 4 February 1679: 'Sa Majesté m'ordonne de vous faire savoir qu'Elle veut que vous donniez à Alard la permission de représenter en public à la Foire Saint-Germain les sauts, accompagnés de quelques discours, qu'il a joués devant Sa Majesté'.⁵¹ However, to safeguard Lully's privilège, Alard and Maurice were forbidden to include singing in their productions, or dancing other than on a cord,⁵² and their orchestra was limited to four violins and one oboe.⁵³ Unfortunately, we have no record of any other, subsequent productions by this company.

⁵⁰ On the position of the pastoral in relation to the machine play and the development of opera, see Gros, 'Origines', pp. 162-6.

⁵¹ Albert, Théâtres de la foire, p. 6.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Gustave Chouquet, Histoire de la musique dramatique en France (Paris, 1873), p. 126.

La Comédie-Italienne

Nor was the company of Italian actors with whom the Guénégaud troupe shared its theatre unaware of the advantages to be obtained by the presentation of spectacular productions. This was, in fact, the main cause of their legal dispute with the Guénégaud troupe, as La Grange noted in his Registre in December 1679: 'Le 14^e a commencé le procès contre les comédiens italiens au sujet des machines et innovations qu'ils voulaient faire à nôtre théâtre' (I, 227-8). Details of the Guénégaud company's case against the Italians are to be found in a copy of a 'Placet' presented to the King on behalf of the company, preserved in the Archives of the Comédie-Française. Here, the actors recall how, shortly after having taken possession of the Guénégaud theatre:

M. de Colbert nous fit l'honneur de nous proposer de ... recevoir <les comédiens italiens> dans nôtre lieu, comme une chose agréable à Votre Majesté, attendu qu'ils ne nous étaient point d'embarras, n'ayant affaire que de quatre châssis de maisons pour représenter leurs comédies..., aux conditions que lesdits comédiens italiens ne se pourraient servir de nos décorations, machines, ni autres choses, étant présentement, ou qui seront ci-après audit lieu, ni faire aucune ouverture au théâtre, ni toucher à aucuns mouvements, ni rien rompre ou déplacer, mais qu'ils auraient seulement l'usage du théâtre, loges, amphithéâtre et parterre, sans pouvoir prétendre logements, ni autres choses dans le lieu....⁵⁴

They go on to describe how, far from honouring the terms of this contract:

... les comédiens italiens ont toujours fait ce qu'ils ont pu pour y contrevenir, et trouvant un lieu plein de machines, ils ont voulu s'en servir au préjudice du traité, à quoi nous sommes toujours opposés....

Nos oppositions verbales n'ont pu empêcher qu'ils n'aient fait de temps en temps de nouvelles entreprises, jusqu'à rompre nôtre théâtre, et déplacer des mouvements, avoir mis la salle en danger du feu par quantité de pétards et artifices dont les propriétaires nous firent alors de

⁵⁴ Dossier Les Italiens.

grandes plaintes comme étant chargés du bail, et cent autres choses trop longues à déduire ici....

The members of the company finally resolved to take action upon hearing that 'ils faisaient encore de nouveaux projets qui allaient à la destruction de nos machines et notre théâtre'. They point out that the stage and its machinery belong to them, as a result of their having purchased them outright from Sourdéac and Champeron, and request that the Italians be instructed:

... de ne point contrevenir aux conditions qui ont été réglées par M. de Colbert sous le bon plaisir de Votre Majesté, et sous lesquelles nous les avons reçus, ou s'ils veulent faire des machines dans notre lieu, ce qui est incompatible et détruit les nôtres, qu'ils nous remboursent la moitié desdites dépenses que nous avons faites, s'ils n'aiment mieux avec l'agrément de Votre Majesté, prendre un autre jeu de paume.

In notes made, no doubt, for the preparation of this placet, the French actors further state that the Italians 'prétendent faire des pièces de spectacle', and in so doing, 'embarrassent le théâtre de manière que les Français ne peuvent exécuter leur dessein', and 'leur rompent tous leurs préparatifs'. They also accuse them, as we have seen, of having threatened the safety of the building by the use of a firework in the play entitled Le Baron de Foeneste, and of having overburdened 'les galeries des machines desdits sieurs français ... faites seulement pour le passage des décorateurs'.

The Italians responded with a placet in which they represent the entire dispute as having been stirred up by the Guénégaud company out of their malevolent intentions:

Les comédiens italiens de Votre Majesté lui représentent très humblement que la plupart des pièces qu'ils composent pour le divertissement de Votre Majesté sont remplies d'incidents qui les obligent pour les rendre plus agréables d'y joindre diverses machines et décorations, et bien que jusqu'à présent ils aient été dans une liberté toute entière

de représenter leurs pièces avec tous les ornements qui y conviennent, les comédiens français de l'Hôtel du Guénégaud se sont avisés depuis quelques jours seulement de vouloir leur empêcher la représentation de leurs pièces dans lesquelles il entre des machines et des changements de théâtre; ce qui est proprement les vouloir chasser de l'Hôtel Guénégaud, puisqu'ils ont à présent très peu de pièces simples, et même ils ont déjà commencé d'ajouter à ce dessein quelques mauvais traitements de paroles injurieuses.⁵⁵

And they point out that while sharing the Palais-Royal with Molière, they had, 'toujours continué sans aucun trouble ni empêchement de réciter leurs pièces et de se servir de leur théâtre et de leurs machines particulières'. They complain that they pay half of the annual rent of the Guénégaud as well as half the cost of any repairs, but that they do not enjoy the same advantages as the French company as far as the income from the refreshment booth and the renting of apartments within the theatre is concerned, and more particularly, that they are not allowed to share backstage storage facilities, so that 'ils n'ayⁱent pas d'endroit pour serrer leurs décorations et qu'ils soient obligés de louer pour cela des lieux particuliers'. In answer to the charge that the French company owned those machines to be found within the Guénégaud, and that their own were damaging the stage, the Italians reply that:

A l'égard de la première raison, les comédiens italiens répondent qu'ils ne se sont jamais servis et qu'ils ne prétendent point se servir des machines des français; ils ont les leurs en particulier dont ils se servent. A l'égard du théâtre, ils ont également intérêt de le conserver puisqu'ils contribuent pour leur part aux réparations lorsqu'il y en a à faire, et cette même raison doit sans doute leur en faire laisser l'usage libre pour s'en servir à la représentation de leurs comédies.

Then, moving onto the attack, they accuse the French troupe of having no real grievance against them:

⁵⁵ Ibid.

... il y a dix-neuf ans qu'ils représentent ensemble sur le même théâtre et que l'on ne s'est pas avisé de vouloir réduire les Italiens à jouer des pièces toutes nues sans les ornements qu'ils ont accoutumé leur ouvrage au goût des Français, et qu'ils osent dire d'avoir été si heureux que de rendre capable de divertir quelquefois le plus grand de tous les rois après ses importantes et précieuses occupations.

Ce n'est qu'un esprit d'avarice qui fait agir les comédiens français. Ils veulent ôter aux Italiens tout le spectacle pour en remplir leurs pièces et voudraient même les fatiguer jusqu'au point de les obliger à quitter le théâtre afin de pouvoir profiter seuls, et comme ils ont accueilli parmi eux un grand nombre d'acteurs, d'être en état de représenter tous les jours.

The various claims contained within this placet are interesting on several counts. Firstly we see that in a conscious attempt to satisfy the tastes of their Parisian public, the Italians had increased the quantity of spectacle in their productions. Secondly, we learn that the Guénégaud company wished, in effect, to obtain for itself a monopoly on such spectacular theatrical productions as were permissible under the terms of Lully's ordonnance. This seems highly likely, given the success that such productions evidently enjoyed. Thirdly, the Italians suggest that this legal action by the French company was part of a plan to have the former troupe expelled from the Guénégaud theatre, so that they could perform on the jours ordinaires and extraordinaires. They mention that the present size of the company now makes this possible, no doubt a reference to the hiring of M. and Mlle Champmeslé the previous Easter. Again, this accusation would appear to have some basis in fact (we have seen that the Guénégaud company did perform on the jours ordinaires when the Italian troupe was temporarily absent from the capital), and it anticipates the situation that was to exist after the Comédie-Française was in operation at the Guénégaud theatre and the Italians had transferred to the Hôtel de Bourgogne.

Unfortunately, we have little evidence as to those plays which were performed by the Italian company in Paris in this period. The

titles of four and brief details of their reception are given in Le Mercure galant (Scaramouche et Arlequin juifs errants de Babylone, 1677; La Propreté ridicule, 1677; La Magie naturelle ou la magie sans magie, 1678; Le Médecin du temps, 1679). Others are mentioned by the Parfaict brothers in their history of the Ancien Théâtre Italien (Arlequin, soldat et bagage, July 1673; Le Baron de Foeneste, January 1674; Le Triomphe de la médecine, 14 May 1674; A fourbe fourbe et demi, October 1674). Performances by the Italian company took the form of improvisations around a basic outline or canevas. Certain of these were noted down by Dominique Biancolelli who played Scaramouche, and this formed the Parfaict brothers' source of information.⁵⁶ Details to be found in the Parfaict's work would seem to bear out the Italian actors' contention that, even during the period of their shared occupation of the Palais-Royal, their works had already contained spectacular elements. Indeed, in 1672, and no doubt responding to the success of Pomone and Psyché in the same way as the Marais company did with their machine plays, the Italians performed a comedy entitled Le Collier de perles, said to be 'mêlée de ballets et de musique'.⁵⁷ This work included three entrées, the last of which featured a magician, a shepherd and shepherdess, and dancing demons and witches, and for which, 'la scène, qui pendant la plus grande partie de la pièce n'a représenté qu'une chambre, se change en une solitude' (pp. 403-4).

Of the works produced by the Italian troupe at the Guénégaud theatre, Arlequin, soldat et bagage appears to have included a single song, when Arlequin appeared 'en gentilhomme ... et introduit un aveugle qu'il fait chanter' (p. 418). Le Baron de Foeneste was, however,

⁵⁶ Biancolelli's manuscript is preserved in the Bibliothèque de l'Opéra (Rés. 625, 1-2).

⁵⁷ Parfaict, Ancien Théâtre italien, p. 389.

considerably more spectacular. Indeed, Robinet in his letter of 6 January 1674, describes it specifically as 'un grand spectacle'⁵⁸ It involves frequent scene changes, one of which reveals a besieged fort, and another necessitating the use of a 'ferme' or shutter (pp. 426, 429). Elsewhere, as we have seen, 'La Montagne (gagiste) vêtu en polichinelle, danse avec Le Fèvre (autre gagiste) habillé en nourrice; ce dernier vient prendre le Baron, et danse avec lui une bourrée. Le Baron prend Diamantine, et exécute une chaconne avec elle. Ensuite on sert la collation' (p. 432). When the play was revived in April 1674, it was ^{with} the addition of more music, this time accompanied by singing: 'Arlequin, fait donner un concert d'instruments, mêlé de voix, à Eularia ... et lorsque le musicien chante, il fait le lazzi de tomber en faiblesse par excès de plaisir' (p. 433).

Le Triomphe de la médecine was based, as the title would suggest, on Molière's Le Malade imaginaire, but modified in that in the ceremony with which that play concludes, 'on y a ajouté la cérémonie de la bastonnade, qui est prise de la comédie du Bourgeois gentilhomme' (p. 437). A fourbe fourbe et demi, on the other hand, would appear to have had virtually no spectacular content. The same cannot be said of La Propreté ridicule. The report of this production in Le Mercure galant of July 1677 describes it as being 'mêlée de quelques entrées qui lui donnent beaucoup d'agréments' (p. 255), and Giuliana Colajanni in her study of Les Scenarios franco-italiens du Ms. 9329 de la Bibliothèque Nationale, which includes a later version of this canevas, notes that 'La musique, la choréographie, la scénographie devaient contribuer de manière déterminante à enrichir le spectacle de 1677; il reste dans le canevas du Ms de l'Opéra quelques traces de cet aspect de la

⁵⁸ In Parfaict, Ancien Théâtre italien, p. 420.

représentation: "une entrée deux fois" avant le début du spectacle, l'indication que "Scaramouche chante une chanson pour âne amoureux".⁵⁹

Of the two remaining plays which we know to have been performed by the company of Italian actors, we only have information as to the production of La Magie naturelle ou la magie sans magie. Here again two separate manuscript versions exist. The chief characteristic of the later of these, according to Colajanni, is that it contains 'les éléments qui tendent vers le spectacle, le recours à la machinerie, le lit qui crache du feu, les statues à ressort, les changements de décor, le moulin, la grotte, le géant qui porte la montagne' (p. 277). These are somewhat reduced in the primitive version, although the statues and the mill are present, and the work does call for changes of scene, and it may be that others were present in the performance without having been noted in the canevas. There is, therefore, a certain amount of textual evidence to support the admission made by the company of Italian actors that, like so many other individuals associated with the theatre at this time, they found that the best means of increasing their popularity was by increasing the amount of spectacle to be found in their performances.⁶⁰

Judgement was given in the matter of the dispute between the French and the Italian actors on 20 January 1673. It was declared that the Italians should be allowed to use those trap-doors already present in the stage, but that they could not make new ones without the prior consent of the French actors; that they could construct stone corbels on

⁵⁹ Giuliana Colajanni, Les Scenarios franco-italiens du Ms. 9329 de la Bibliothèque Nationale (Rome, 1970), p. 202.

⁶⁰ Du Tralage records that another work performed by the Italian actors in the 1670s was La Comédie de Jason by M. de Fatouville, in which 'il y avait à la fin une machine surprenante de plusieurs cascades et de quarante jets d'eau naturelle de diverses hauteurs', the work of Sieur Angelo (Notes et documents, p. 7).

either side of the stage to support beams from which their machines could be operated, on condition that these beams were taken down after each day's performance, and that they in no way hindered the operation of the French company's counterbalance systems. They were forbidden from using the latter troupe's machines, as well as from leaning or placing anything on or against the timbers from which these machines were operated or which supported the roof. As for storage space, the Italians were allocated a specific area below the stage in which to store their properties and décors, they were also to be allowed to construct machinery below the stage for the operation of certain special effects. But it was expressly stated that all properties, décors and machines had to be removed at the end of each day's performance, so as to leave the whole of the stage, and above and below stage areas available for the French.

It is clear from the above, therefore, that during the period in which it was in operation, the Guénégaud company was not alone in attempting to satisfy the public's taste for spectacle despite the restrictions imposed by the ordonnances issued in Lully's favour. What is more, the company's legal dispute with the Italian troupe with which it shared its theatre shows us that, just as Lully was ruthless in his desire to maintain his monopoly on musical productions, so the Guénégaud company could be ruthless in its desire to prevent others from taking advantage of the popularity of spectacle as a means of attracting audiences. Nevertheless, as we have seen, spectacle had, with a very few exceptions, been associated with music from the earliest days of the machine play. The Guénégaud company in 1675, found itself in the difficult position of having to find a means of providing the public with spectacle while at the same time respecting the terms of Lully's ordonnances. How they attempted to do this we will see when we turn to

consider the three remaining spectacular productions written by Thomas Corneille and Donneau De Visé for the Guénégaud company: L'Inconnu, Le Triomphe des dames and La Devineresse. Finally, I will consider the final machine play produced by these two writers, La Pierre philosophale, performed at the Comédie-Française in 1681, possibly the last machine play to have been created on the French stage in the seventeenth century.

L'INCONNU

The form the machine play next took in the hands of Thomas Corneille and Donneau De Visé was that of L'Inconnu. In this work, the two authors turned their backs on the mythological universe that had hitherto been the main domain of the genre, and set their play in a world of romanticized contemporary reality. Thomas Corneille warned his unsuspecting readers in the 'Au lecteur' to L'Inconnu that: 'Après avoir fait paraître dans Circé une partie de ce que le théâtre a de plus pompeux pour la beauté des machines, j'ai cru que le public ne serait pas fâché d'être divertie par les agréments qu'une matière galante est capable de recevoir'. This does not mean that L'Inconnu was devoid of spectacle, however, nor, indeed, of machines, but these were of a different type to those to be found in Circé and the machine plays that had gone before.

L'Inconnu concerns the attempt of an unknown gentleman to woo his reluctant mistress by means of a series of extravagant entertainments, one for each act of the play. Aware that the public might expect his work to be endowed with the convoluted plot usual in a comedy on such a subject, Thomas attempted to stem off any criticism, explaining:

... vous ne trouverez point ces grandes intrigues qui ont accoutumé de faire le noeud des comédies de cette nature, parce que les ornements qu'on m'a prêtés demandant beaucoup de temps, n'ont pu souffrir que j'ai poussé ce sujet dans

toute son étendue. Si ce retranchement d'incidents est un défaut, il est réparé par quantité de choses agréables qui forment les divertissements que l'Inconnu donne à sa maîtresse.⁶¹

The 'Au lecteur' would have been included with the text of L'Inconnu on its publication. To warn his audience in the theatre as to the innovatory aspects of what they were about to see, Thomas took advantage of the device of the prologue. Here, Thalie, the Muse of comedy, asks the advice of Le Génie de la France, 'sur la peine où elle se trouvait touchant quelque nouveauté qu'elle avait dessein de faire paraître'. Thalie explains her difficulty in the following terms:

Je promettrais encore des divertissements
Dont on aimerait le spectacle,
Si pour faire crier miracle
J'en pouvais à mon choix régler les ornements.
Quand Sémélé, Circé, la Toison, Andromède,
Sur la scène à l'envie se sont fait admirer,
Par la machine à qui tout cède,
Chacun avec plaisir se laissait attirer.
Mais que pensera-t-on, si toujours je m'obstine
A faire voir machine sur machine?
Comme on se plaît à la diversité,
Il est de galantes matières,
Qui, par les agréments de quelque nouveauté,
Auraient des grâces singulières.

These lines demonstrate that, if they deviated from the traditional form of the machine play in L'Inconnu, Thomas Corneille and De Visé did not do so of their own volition, but were compelled by the lack of freedom concerning the 'ornements' they were allowed to use. That this, as in the Prologue to Circé, is a reference to the limitations imposed by the terms of the ordonnances issued in Lully's favour is made still clearer when Thalie refers specifically to the hero of the play, pointing out to

⁶¹ Delmas (Mythologie, p. 42), believes 'grandes intrigues' here to refer to the tragic subjects on which machine plays were usually based, and which Thomas Corneille was abandoning. This interpretation would, however, appear to be belied by the conclusion of the quotation.

Le Génie de la France his difficulty in entertaining his mistress without recourse to music or dance:

Mais l'amour aura beau le rendre ingénieux,
Que fera-t-il de magnifique,
S'il n'a pas pour l'oreille et les yeux
Ni pompe de ballets; ni charmes de musique?

Le Génie de la France replies consolingly that, 'Il peut se reposer sur moi / Du soin de ses galantes fêtes'. And, indeed, music is essential to all the divertissements contained within L'Inconnu, with the exception of the play in Act V. Moreover, the Guénégaud company appear to have quite blatantly contravened the terms of the royal ordonnance in their production of L'Inconnu by hiring professional singers and dancers and a harpsichordist just as they had done for Circé. Indeed, they went further and also hired a player of the theorbo (R III, 100 v^o). Whether they had obtained permission to do so, or whether they hoped that they would be protected by their invocation of Le Génie de la France, we cannot know. The music for L'Inconnu was provided, like that of all Thomas Corneille's machine plays for the Guénégaud company, by Marc-Antoine Charpentier, who received 11 livres per performance (R III, 100 v^o). Unfortunately, however, the score has been lost, with the exception of certain additions made at the time of the work's revival in 1678.⁶² The professional singers hired by the company were M. Poussin and Mlle Bastonnet, who had both also appeared in Circé (R III, 100 v^o). The choreography of the dance sequences for L'Inconnu was by La Montagne, who received 55 livres 'pour avoir dressé les pantomimes' plus 1 livre 10 sols per performance (R III, 98 v^o, 100 v^o).

⁶² Hitchcock, Oeuvres, p. 371.

L'Inconnu is of the type of play defined by Georges Forestier as 'la comédie au château', in which the playwright presents a group of amateur or professional actors producing a dramatic work in a noble residence.⁶³ As such, L'Inconnu would have had the attraction of presenting for the benefit of audiences in the public theatre a representation of those types of exclusive entertainments offered to members of the Court at Versailles and elsewhere. As a 'comédie au château', L'Inconnu is highly reminiscent of Le Berger extravagant, in which a group of nobles are seen in a country house setting assuming rôles so as to amuse themselves at Lysis's expense. There, too, machines played a part in the entertainment, with a flying chariot being found conveniently at hand when required.

L'Inconnu is, in fact, an excellent example of 'le théâtre dans le théâtre'.⁶⁴ The Comtesse and her friends in each act assume the rôle of an onstage audience at the various spectacles provided by the unknown gentleman. In Act I, scene 6, they are entertained by a dialogue between two children representing L'Amour and La Jeunesse, a minuet danced by La Jeunesse, and an Italian song performed by a Moor 'vêtu en Indien'. In Act II, scene 7, the divertissement is more elaborate. A 'berceau' featuring such divinities as Bacchus, Ceres, Flora, Abundance, Pan, Sylvain, and Orpheus is the means of presenting a collation of fruit to the Comtesse. Having made their choice, the onstage audience is entertained while eating by a group of peasants, who, 'après avoir fait

⁶³ Georges Forestier, Le Théâtre dans le théâtre sur la scène française du XVII^e siècle (Geneva, 1981), p. 80. Forestier distinguishes his use of the term from that of Ross Chambers in La Comédie au château: contribution à la poétique du théâtre (Paris, 1971), where it is the expression 'de la profonde et troublante affinité des châtelains et des baladins' (p. 8).

⁶⁴ Hence its inclusion in Aspects du théâtre dans le théâtre au XVII^e siècle: recueil de pièces, edited by Georges Forestier (Toulouse, 1986).

quelques figures pour marquer leur joie, font un jeu avec des bâtons, et l'ont à peine fini, que sans sortir du lieu où ils sont, ils paraissent tous en un moment vêtus en arlequins, et réjouissent la comtesse par mille figures plaisantes' (II, 8), and by a sung dialogue between Vertumne and Pomone. Act III, scene 6 features songs and dances by a 'troupe de bohémiens', and Act IV, scene 6, a sung dialogue between Alcidon and Aminte and another song. It is, however, Act V which can truly be said to include a play within a play. In this act, as we have seen, the chief spectacle was provided by the appearance of a low, richly decorated secondary stage level, which rolled out from the rear of the main stage. The performance to be held on this stage was heralded by songs performed by a Moor and a Moress, and dances featuring Moors and 'Amours', during which four Cupids simultaneously fired their darts at the Comtesse (V, 4). The stage direction to be found at the end of this scene in the published version of L'Inconnu states that 'On joue les trois scènes suivantes sur le petit théâtre'. The three scenes which follow are, as Forestier points out, the exact mirror of the main play of L'Inconnu.⁶⁵ They are based on the myth of Psyché and concern the revelation of the identity of her mysterious lover, and are similarly the means of revealing to the Comtesse the portrait of her own admirer. When L'Inconnu was first performed, however, these three scenes were not included, as Thomas Corneille informs us in his 'Au lecteur': 'Vous trouverez ici le cinquième acte plus rempli qu'il ne l'est dans la représentation, où le Marquis se contente de promettre la comédie à la Comtesse: j'en fais un divertissement effectif qu'il lui fait donner sur le petit théâtre, sous le titre de L'Inconnu'. It would appear that the Guénégaud company incorporated this inner play into their production of L'Inconnu shortly afterwards, for on the occasion of its revival in

⁶⁵ Théâtre dans le théâtre, p. 161.

January 1679, De Visé noted in Le Mercure galant that 'Le cinquième acte en est changé, et a été pris d'une autre pièce du même auteur, qui n'ayant aucune part à ce changement ne doit pas répondre du manque de justesse qui s'y peut trouver' (p. 331). The inner play could not have been changed if it had never been included. According to the Parfaict brothers, it was replaced by the third act divertissement from Le Triomphe des dames, and a further addition made at the same time was that of 'le bavolet' sung by a peasant girl.⁶⁶ This was so popular that it was reproduced in Le Mercure galant of October 1680 (pp. 333-5). A new overture to the work may also have been added at this time,⁶⁷ although, according to the published version of the play, it was already equipped with one in 1675.

The spectacle in L'Inconnu was not to be found solely within the divertissements offered by the Marquis to the Comtesse. The décor of the Prologue consisted of 'une montagne toute de rochers, aux côtés de laquelle on découvre plusieurs arbres, avec cette différence, que les montagnes qui ont été vues jusqu'ici au théâtre sont d'une peinture plate qui représente le relief, et que celle-ci est un relief effectif'.⁶⁸ At the command of Le Génie de la France, 'On voit ici la montagne se remuer; elle est en un moment couverte d'arbres, et il s'en détache des pierres qui sont changées en hommes: ces hommes touchent d'autres pierres, et elles deviennent des violons entre leurs mains; ils en jouent un air dont la vitesse du mouvement rend Thalie toute

⁶⁶ Parfaict, Histoire, XI, 427-8.

⁶⁷ Hitchcock, Oeuvres, pp. 374-5.

⁶⁸ This claim would appear to be contradicted by the description of the décor for the Prologue of De Visé's Les Amours du Soleil, in the livre de sujet of which it is stated that the mountain represented 'est de grandeur naturelle, et même en relief; et l'on n'en doute pas, puisque les neuf Muses sont dessus, accompagnées d'Apollon qui est au milieu d'elles' (p. 3).

surprise'. Then, 'on voit deux morceaux de rocher se changer en une nymphe et un berger; ils s'avancent et chantent'. At the close of this song, 'Les arbres qui ont paru sur la montagne, s'en séparent, et forment successivement des buissons, des allées et des berceaux'. The nymph and the shepherd sing again, and the Prologue concludes with Thalie and Le Génie de la France leaving the stage 'par-dessous une allée qui occupe le milieu du théâtre, et qui en tient toute la longueur; et lorsqu'ils sont tout-à-fait retirés, cette grande allée forme trois petits monts, qui se changent en un instant en plusieurs arbres; ces arbres se retirent un moment après, et les violons jouent une ouverture'. It should be noted that, with the exception of the moveable stage of Act V, on no other occasion in the text of L'Inconnu is a description given of the décor against which the action should be set. The play opens with the line: 'Entrer dans ce château!', which is evidently considered sufficient to specify the location, and one can only suppose that the stage would have represented a neutral outdoor area within the grounds of the château to which the Comtesse has required pending the outcome of a court case.

Rather more detail is given in the the livre de sujet,⁶⁹ where it is stated that for Act I: 'Le théâtre représente un château d'architecture de marbre blanc, et moitié de brique, à la moderne, orné de pilastres en quelques endroits, et de colonnes d'albâtre qui soutiennent des balcons de fer doré, avec les frises remplies d'ornements, et les corniches où sont posés des vases de marbre blanc de distance en distance en symétrie' (p. 9). This must represent one of the first instances of a modern building being used as the décor for a machine play. L'Inconnu also involved a change of décor, for it is said of Act II in the livre de sujet that, 'Cet Acte se passe dans un bois

⁶⁹ L'Inconnu, comédie mêlée d'ornements (Paris, 1676).

qui doit être proche du château de la Comtesse' (p. 21). The scenic requirements for L'Inconnu are recorded in the Mémoire de Mahelot as 'Deux théâtres, à savoir: une forêt et des maisons, l'optique est un château; pour le second acte, il faut un berceau et son optique, la forêt paraît' (p. 124). This last remark would seem to indicate that what was called for between Acts I and II was a changement à vue. Nevertheless, this is clearly infinitely removed from the elaborate and numerous changements à vue which marked the transitions between acts in the traditional machine play.

Even so, in the Prologue and divertissements of L'Inconnu are to be found many of those elements associated with the machine play in its traditional form: the use of stage machinery and spectacular effects, transformations both of décor and costume, music and dancing, and the presence of characters from mythological and pastoral sources. Already, in earlier examples of the genre, there had been a tendency for the spectacle to be reduced to the status of episodic divertissements, punctuating the plot, as when the arrival of a god or an expression of joy was called for. In 1651, Pierre Corneille expressed himself as to the undesirability of this practice in his 'Argument' to Andromède, in which he states that the machines 'ne sont pas dans cette tragédie comme des agréments détachés, elles en font le noeud et le dénouement, et y sont si nécessaires que vous n'en sauriez retrancher aucune, que vous ne fassiez tomber tout l'édifice'.⁷⁰ Curiously, this same view was reiterated much later by one of the worst offenders in this respect; Donneau De Visé, in his 'Au lecteur' to Le Mariage de Bacchus et d'Ariane writes of the critics of his work: 'Leur critique toutefois n'a pu s'attacher aux ornements de cette pièce, ils ont trouvé qu'ils entraient tous dans le sujet, ce qui se rencontre rarement. Comme mon

⁷⁰ Oeuvres complètes, ed. Couton, II, 447.

principal dessein a été que le spectacle y entrât sans y paraître forcé, je crois avoir réussi, puisque j'ai atteint le but que je m'étais proposé'. In L'Inconnu this tendency could be said to have been extended to the point where the elements of the traditional machine play were completely amputated from the text, so as to be contained solely within the Prologue and divertissements. Thus, L'Inconnu could be said to provide not only an example of theatre within theatre, but more specifically, of machine play within machine play, with remnants of the original form being contained within the adapted version.

Frequently, the use of the structure of the play within a play implies a certain degree of self-consciousness. This is certainly to be found in L'Inconnu, where it is underlined by references to such theatrical works as Thomas Corneille's own Circé - 'Les singes m'y charmaient, leur scène est admirable' (IV,7) - as well as to such 'Crispinerie' as Hauteroche's Crispin médecin and Crispin musicien, performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1670 and 1674 respectively:

Le Vicomte J'ai vu le médecin, je crois plus de cent
fois.

Ce pendu qu'on étend sur la table, il
m'enchante.

Le Marquis C'est avec justice.

Le Vicomte Et cet autre qui chante...
(V, 4)⁷¹

Also to be found in L'Inconnu from the Prologue onwards, are references to the practicalities of a theatrical performance, as when the Comtesse asks the actor how his play will be given. The Vicomte suggests the use of 'paravents', to which the actor replies, 'Un moment suffira pour dresser un théâtre' (IV, 7). It is clear, therefore, that what we find in this work is a delight in the theatrical, as well as to a certain extent in the Prologue, a questioning of the nature and requirements of

⁷¹ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 142, 154.

the spectacular. In every act we are presented with examples of the magical effects of which the theatre is capable, and one might suggest that the most significant contribution Thomas Corneille and Donneau De Visé made to the development of the machine play in this work lay precisely in this substitution of a self-consciously theatrical magic for the mythological magic of earlier examples of the genre.

Of particular interest in the context of L'Inconnu as an example of the play within a play is the character of the Marquis's valet, La Montagne, in that he plays the rôle of metteur en scène on two levels, with the second coming about as a natural extension of the first. In the main play, it is he who stage manages the various entertainments on behalf of his master, while at the same time assuming various parts within them: Comus in Act II, scene 7, 'une bohémienne' in Act III, scene 6, and an actor in Act IV, scene 7 and Act V, scene 4. Of these, the gypsy woman and the actor are both the leaders of the troupes to which they belong; the actor, furthermore, instructs the two 'acteurs musiciens' to perform in Act IV, scene 7; and Comus is presented as a veritable divine stage manager, with the lines he uses to describe himself being equally applicable to La Montagne:

Je suis un grand maître en festins,
 A les bien ordonner on connaît mon génie;
 Et l'Amour, dont le goût fut toujours des plus fins,
 Voulant en bonne compagnie
 Vous donner un régal approchant des divins,
 M'a fait maître d'hôtel de la cérémonie.
 (III, 7)

In the play within a play of the fifth act, La Montagne plays the rôle of Zéphire, and here, as Forestier points out, there is an exact correlation between the inner and outer play on another point, in that it is Zéphire who reveals the identity of Psyché's lover, and, without discarding his rôle, by an identification of the Comtesse with the

heroine of the inner play, also reveals the identity of the 'Inconnu' of the main play.⁷²

Preparations for the production of L'Inconnu at the Guénégaud began shortly before the end of the run of Circé, when on 4 October 1675, wood was delivered to the theatre (R III, 73). These preparations appear from the references in the Guénégaud company Registres, to have been on a considerably smaller scale than those for Thomas Corneille's earlier machine play, no doubt because the décors and machinery required were in no way as elaborate. We find, however, similar references to the payment of workmen, for the preparation of scenery, and for the purchase of wood and candles. In many cases the tradespeople and craftsmen who provided goods and services for the troupe were the same as for Circé: the cabaretiers Massé and Docquin, the chandelier Mécard, the vannier Charles, the forgeron Mathurin, the marchand de fer Bouret, Baraillon, Des Barres, Mme Vaignard and the painters Dalaiseau and Saint-Martin. Others included the maçon Gilbert Heritoy, the serrurier Mathurin, the marchand de bois Dubois, the marchand de fleurs artificielles Seneschal, the marchand de ruban Granvost, the cordonnier Loiseau, the marchand de bas Henry, and the garçon tailleur Huirs.

Most of the specific details relating to the construction of the décors for L'Inconnu concern the construction of the moveable stage for Act V and have already been discussed when considering the stage of the Guénégaud theatre. Other references detail the purchase of 'feuilles vertes artificielles' costing 28 livres 10 sols, and other 'feuilles artificielles' specifically for the Prologue of the play, together with 'des bouquets' for which Seneschal received 85 livres. As for Circé and Le Triomphe des dames, the décors for L'Inconnu were painted by Dalaiseau and Saint-Martin, who were paid a total of 700 livres (R III,

⁷² Théâtre dans le théâtre, pp. 161-2.

95 v^o, 97 v^o).⁷³ It is interesting to note that supplementary chandeliers had to be hired for the first and second performances (R III, 95 v^o), and that when the play was revived in 1679, 5 livres were paid to three workmen 'qui ont passé la nuit à remettre en état le berceau de L'Inconnu' (R VII, 101).

Rather more details are to be found concerning the provision of costumes for the assistants: 88 livres were paid for 'les chaussures des marcheurs et petite oie' at 11 livres each; 12 livres 10 sols for gloves; 9 livres for six pairs of shoes for the violinists at 30 sols the pair, no doubt on account of their appearance on stage in the Prologue. 6 livres were paid to Granvost for ten ells (37 1/2 ft., 12 m.) of ribbon to decorate the costume of the singer Poussin; 15 livres to Loiseau for 'six paires de souliers dorés et couleur de chair pour les amours à 50 sols la paire', plus 2 livres 10 sols for 'une paire au petit La Montagne', who probably played the rôle of L'Amour. 54 livres were paid to Henry for stockings for the assistants; 6 livres for two pairs of shoes for Poussin, and a total of 36 livres to Mlle Bastonnet 'pour ses coiffures, garnitures et chaises des répétitions'. Finally, 12 livres were paid for 'la perruque de L'Amour', and a further 12 livres for 'la coiffure de la petite Dupin, who would thus appear to have played La Jeunesse, and 3 livres for 'les rubans de L'Amour' (R III, 95 v^o, 97 v^o, 98 v^o, 103-4, 106). 'Ustensiles' for L'Inconnu were again provided by. Mme Vaignard who received 66 livres. Other properties included 'une boîte', a 'portrait' and 'une bourse' which together cost 6 livres, and four pairs of castanets costing a total of 12 livres (R III, 94 v^o, 95 v^o, 97 v^o).

⁷³ Again, Thomas Corneille in the livre de sujet refers to 'Messieurs de la Hire, de Lessaus, et de Saint -Martin', although the first name is nowhere to be found in the Registres.

The first reference in the Guénégaud Registres to rehearsals for L'Inconnu occurs on 25 October 1675, when 6 livres were paid 'pour acheter du bois à brûler pour les répétitions de L'Inconnu' (R III, 83). Payments to the cabaretiers prior to this would, however, suggest that rehearsals had begun somewhat earlier. Certain of these rehearsal were held in the home of M. Aubry, refreshments for which cost 22 livres (R III, 97 v^o). Technical rehearsals would have been held on the Guénégaud stage from 13 to 16 November 1679, for which purpose the company were forced to sacrifice one performance, that of Friday 15 November.

The first performance of L'Inconnu was given on Sunday 17 November 1679. The frais ordinaires for each performance were as follows:

MEMOIRE DES FRAIS JOURNALIERS DE L'INCONNU

Frais ordinaires de la porte, ouvreurs de loges, affiches et autres, non compris les violons et la chandelle	48 [#]	
Violons: Converset	3 [#]	15 ^s
Marchand	3 [#]	15 ^s
Duvivier	3 [#]	15 ^s
Dumont	3 [#]	15 ^s 74
Dufresne	3 [#]	
Courcelles	3 [#]	
Clavecin: La Porte	3 [#]	
Theorbe: Carle André	3 [#]	
		27 [#]
Soixante et deux livres de chandelle à 7 ^s la livre	21 [#]	14 ^s
Danseurs et marcheurs au nombre de huit à 3 [#]	24 [#]	
Quatre petits amours dansant ou assistant à 1 [#] 10 ^s	6 [#]	
A La Montagne compositeur des pas	1 [#]	10 ^s
Voix: M. Poussin	7 [#]	
Mlle Bastonnet	7 [#]	
L'Amour et La Jeunesse	3 [#]	
Deux menuisiers: Flandre		
Ferrier	4 [#]	
Cinq manoeuvres et Crosnier le père	6 [#]	
Deux garçons tailleurs et la femme de Des Barres	3 [#]	
A Saint-Amant Gratis	1 [#]	10 ^s
Assistant pour la pièce		15 ^s
Décorateurs d'augmentation	1 [#]	10 ^s
Poudreur barbier	1 [#]	10 ^s

74 The four musicians receiving 3 livres 15 sols per performance are described as the 'petit choeur'.

M. Charpentier compositeur de la musique	11 [#]
Somme des frais journaliers	175 [#] 5 ^s
	(R III, 100 v ^o)

From the above, it is clear that the spectacle to be found in L'Inconnu was on a greatly reduced scale from that which featured in Circé and the earlier machine plays. When compared with the frais ordinaires for Circé, most noticeable is the total absence of 'voleurs', since L'Inconnu necessitated no flights, and the significant reduction in the number of backstage workers, since the use stage machinery and changements à vue had been severely restricted. It is apparent, however, that despite the limitations of Lully's ordonnance, music and dancing still played an important part. In this context it is interesting to note that certain of the company are referred to in both musical and non-musical terms as 'danseurs ou marcheurs' and 'petits amours dansant ou assistant'.

L'Inconnu was a great success, although without attracting the same astonishingly high attendances as at the first performances of Circé. Even so, the average takings per performance during its first run were 901 livres, which can be compared with an overall average for that season of 687 livres 15 sols. What is more, thanks no doubt to the reduced scale of its spectacle, the Guénégaud company were able to revive it, with the result that its success was long-lasting. In fact, L'Inconnu was the only one of Thomas Corneille's machine plays to be so revived at the Guénégaud. It was given thirty-two performances in its first season, three in 1676-7, six in 1678-9 and six in 1679-80. In January 1679, De Visé in Le Mercure galant wrote of the second of these revivals: 'Cette galante pièce a des agréments si particuliers qu'on commence à y courir en foule, comme on faisait il y a trois ans' (p. 330). And in April 1679, he announced the third revival, adding: 'C'est

une pièce dont on n'a jamais vu finir les représentations qu'avec regret' (p. 363)

LE TRIOMPHE DES DAMES

The production of the third machine play by Thomas Corneille to be presented by the Guénégaud company, Le Triomphe des dames of 1676, has been studied in great detail by Sylvie Chevalley. It will, therefore, only be considered here in terms of its position in the development of the genre.⁷⁵ The plot of Le Triomphe des dames is centred upon a Baron 'entêté de chevalerie, et qui s'étant gâté l'esprit par la lecture de l'Arioste, des Amadis, et des vieux romans, qui lui ont inspiré l'amour des carrousels et des spectacles, a préparé un combat à la barrière, pour rendre plus solonnel le jour destiné au mariage de ses deux nièces, Aminte et Ismène' (p. 1). In this work, Thomas Corneille appears to have attempted to rework the successful formula of L'Inconnu in that it, too, is a 'comédie au château' in which spectacle is integrated into a love plot. Once more he was concerned with presenting for the general public a type of entertainment that had hitherto been the preserve of an élite. This concern extended even to the décor of Le Triomphe des dames, for Act II is set against a grotto which must have been intended to be reminiscent of the Grotte de Thétis at Versailles, before which the Guénégaud company had performed Le Malade imaginaire in 1674:

Dans le fond du théâtre on découvre une grotte, dont la façade forme deux pilastres, et une porte ferrée verte et or, au-dessus du devant de laquelle sont deux grands dauphins de couleur naturelle qui jettent de l'eau dans un bassin. Entre les dauphins est un grand masque de coquille jetant aussi de l'eau dans le même bassin, Il est de nacre

⁷⁵ The text of Le Triomphe des dames was never published and has been lost; all references are, therefore, taken from the work's livre de sujet: Le Triomphe des dames, comédie mêlée d'ornements, avec l'explication du combat à la barrière, et de toutes les devises (Paris, 1676). This is almost entirely reproduced by the Parfaict brothers (Histoire, XI, 456-90).

de perles, et paraît argenté. Les pilastres des deux côtés sont revêtus de glaçons et de fontaines à bassins de marbre de toutes couleurs, taillé en coquilles, d'où pendent des festons de coquillage. Ces bassins sont les uns sur les autres, en sorte qu'ils se voient tous portés par deux nymphes marines de marbre blanc qui sont en bas, avec quantité de roseaux autour d'elles qui paraissent naturels. Au-dessus des pilastres, sur des consoles en attique, sont des vases de rocaille qui jettent de l'eau dans les bassins.

La grotte est magnifique. Une architecture rustique en compose le massif qui règne en symétrie, et qui forme le tout en voûte, en sorte que l'édifice se voit porté par des pilastres égaux de rustique, sur lesquels s'élèvent des voûtes ornées de masques de coquille, de glaçons, de pierres rustiques, et d'une infinité de coquilles bizarres de différentes sortes, qui y font des ornements, aussi bien que dans les frises des cintres, autour desquels sont des bordures d'argent et de nacre de perles, taillées d'une manière qui laisse voir une variété de couleurs et de coquillages naturels très agréables pour la vue. Dans tous les pilastres sont des fontaines ornées des tritons marins de marbre blanc isolés, faits de différentes manières, avec des animaux marins mêlés ensemble, qui font que les pilastres se trouvent tous différents. Sous toutes ces figures de tritons et d'animaux, il y a des façons de bassins de rocaille et de coquilles, suppôts et bases de rustique, ornés de coquillages de différentes couleurs naturelles, nacre de perles, corail, avec des bordures d'argent, pierres de lapis, et glaçons rustiques de toute sorte de façons, qui offrent aux yeux un tout dont la richesse les surprend agréablement. Les massifs des pilastres et du corps de l'édifice, sont revêtus de nacre de perles en bordure, de pierres de lapis et de rustique, et d'autres pierres de diverses couleurs. L'optique est un fond de grotte orné de petits bassins de marbre en forme de coquilles, avec des enfants sur des cygnes, au nombre de cinq, qui jettent de l'eau qu'on voit retomber dans un grand bassin de rocaille; le tout orné de coquilles, lapis, nacre de perles, et pierres de coloris. Dans le fond de la grotte, au-dessus des petits bassins, est un jour percé en forme ronde, environné de coquilles. La voûte est toute de coquillage, et l'on y voit un masque de rocaille pareil à celui des autres cintres. (pp. 8-10)

The décors for Le Triomphe des dames were once again provided by Dalaiseau and Saint-Martin, and the contract signed between them and the Guénégaud company gives further details as to the decoration of the grotto. To the rear were to be seen 'une vasque dans laquelle un monstre

marin déverse de l'eau', in which 'Diane accompagnée de ses chiens s'y baigne', while 'à demi dissimulé, Actéon la contemple'.⁷⁶

From the above, it is clear that despite the similarity of their settings, one of the most significant features distinguishing Le Triomphe des dames from L'Inconnu was that in the former work décor was once again used as a major source of spectacle. For, if it is merely stated of Act I that 'la décoration de cet acte représente le château du Baron' (p. 1), in Act II:

Le théâtre change, et représente dans cet acte une allée magnifique du jardin du Baron. On voit des deux côtés des palissades de verdure, le long desquelles règnent plusieurs termes d'hommes et de femmes faits d'un très beau marbre blanc, et entre lesquels sont de magnifiques vases dorés tous remplis de fleurs. Ces termes portent sur leur tête des vases de verdure découpée, entre lesquels sont attachés plusieurs festons de fleurs. (p. 8)

It is at the end of this 'allée' that the grotto is to be seen. The décors for Acts III and IV of Le Triomphe des dames would appear to have been quite similar. Of the former, it is noted in the stage direction that, 'Des arbres qui tiennent au village où le Baron a son château font la décoration de cet acte. On voit dans le fond trois belles allées de verdure qui marquent trois différents chemins' (p. 15); and of the latter, 'Cet acte se passe dans un bois qui en fait la décoration, et qui ne doit pas être éloigné du château du Baron' (p. 20). Act V, however, which includes the 'combat à la barrière' around which the entire work is constructed, required as its décor the sumptuous dais provided for the judges of the tournament, described above in connection with the use of an upper stage level at the Guénégaud.

⁷⁶ Chevalley, 'Triomphe', p. 380.

As well as considering Le Triomphe des dames as a continuation of L'Inconnu, it is also possible to see in it an anticipation of La Devineresse, in that here Thomas would similarly appear to be attempting to exploit contemporary fashion: in this case a nostalgia for days of chivalry, together with an interest in emblems and devices. This taste for chivalry found its expression in, amongst other things, carrousels, courses de bagues and other such equestrian entertainments. Possibly the most celebrated of these was the Carrousel held in the Place Royale in 1612 for the marriage of Louis XIII.⁷⁷ They came back into favour once more during the early years of the reign of Louis XIV, with notable examples being the Cavalcade or Course de Bague held in the gardens of the Palais-Cardinal in 1656, the Carrousel of 1662 held in the gardens of Mademoiselle, the Carrousel which closed the entertainments of the first day of Les Plaisirs de l'Ile enchantée in 1664, the Carrousel des Amazones at the end of the Carnaval in 1667 and a Carrousel at Versailles in 1676.⁷⁸ It is of particular interest that the Carrousels of 1612 and 1662, and the Course de Bague of 1656 were not in fact closed to the general public;⁷⁹ indeed, the participants paraded through the streets of Paris precisely in order that the inhabitants should be included in the festivities. As, however, during the reign of Louis XIV, the Court withdrew from Paris, these entertainments became increasingly the monopoly of a privileged élite. In his dramatisation of such an entertainment, therefore, Thomas was very much allowing the general public a glimpse of something which was no longer accessible to them.

⁷⁷ Lawrenson, French Stage, p. 230.

⁷⁸ Moine, Fêtes, pp. 21-31.

⁷⁹ The audience at the Carrousel of 1612 was apparently composed of over five thousand spectators (Lawrenson, French Stage, p. 230).

In 1669, Claude-François Ménéstrier published his Traité des tournois, joutes, carrousels et autres spectacles publics, which Thomas used as his source of information as to the etiquette to be followed in such combats. He was aware, however, that these were widely believed to be essentially equestrian affairs, and in order to suppress potential criticism on that account, takes pains in his introduction to his play's livre de sujet, to give examples of other such combats held on foot and indoors:

Si je le fais faire dans une salle du château du Baron, ce n'est que sur l'exemple de plusieurs carrousels qui ont été faits autrefois de cette manière. Il ne faut que lire le père Ménéstrier, dans son traité des tournois. 'Il s'en fait' dit-il, 'dans de grandes salles, et Charles Emmanuel, Duc de Savoie en fit un de cette sorte pour divertir les ambassadeurs de divers princes qui devaient assister au baptême de son fils aîné'. Et dans un autre endroit: 'Ces Carrousels se font à pied, ou à cheval, quand la salle est si vaste et tellement à fleur de terre que les chevaux y peuvent aisément entrer, et faire leurs comparses'. Ceux qui croient qu'on ne combat point à la pique à pied, ne songent pas qu'il y a de la différence entre la pique et la lance pour laquelle on doit toujours être à cheval. Le combat à la barrière qui se fit à Barcelone pour la naissance du Roi d'Espagne à présent régnant, était dans une salle où l'on rompit plusieurs piques; et en 1671 on en fit un en Bavière aussi dans une salle avec plusieurs quadrilles, pour célébrer le jour de la naissance de l'Electrice, sans beaucoup d'autres qui se sont faits de la même manière en Savoie.

He then goes on to give a specifically theatrical example, which may well have provided him with his initial inspiration:

En 1654 il se fit dans la salle du Petit-Bourbon, au ballet des Noces de Thétis et de Pélée, un combat à la barrière qui fut trouvé si beau, que tous ceux qui le virent en furent charmés, quoi qu'il n'eût ni sujet, ni cartels, ni machines, et qu'il fut seulement un simple jeu guerrier, où les chevaliers de Thessalie faisaient paraître leur adresse.

Emblems and devices were an intrinsic part of the spectacle of such entertainments, as well as playing an important part in the

contemporary intellectual, cultural and literary life generally.⁸⁰ Evidence as to their general popularity is provided by the inclusion of an article on the subject in Le Mercure galant of October 1678 (pp. 218-69). Thomas Corneille did not hesitate to take full advantage of this source of spectacle in Le Triomphe des dames, where the devices included in the combat à la barrière pageant of the fifth act are 'toutes à la gloire du beau sexe'. But, once more, he took care to defend himself against possible criticism, giving Ménestrier as his authority:

La plupart de ces devises ne paraîtront guère justes à ceux qui les voudront mesurer aux règles sévères des devises académiques que tant de maîtres ont donnée; mais il faut à mon sens distinguer entre ces devises ingénieuses qui se font avec art et méthode par des professeurs et des savants, et ces devises cavalières qui se font par des gens d'épée, lesquels se contentent souvent d'exprimer leurs pensées et leurs desseins d'un air libre et dégagé....

Thomas was also able to justify his inclusion of a certain amount of stage machinery in the pageant preceding the combat in Act V of Le Triomphe des dames by reference to these same sources: 'Les machines en étaient toujours, c'est pour cela que j'en ai mis ici en faisant paraître La Fidélité dans son char; mais je n'en ai voulu mettre que dans une seule quadrille pour ne pas trop embarrasser le théâtre'. This chariot is described in the Dessein in the following terms:

Le char de La Fidélité paraît ensuite tout brillant d'or, et avec tout ce qui le peut faire connaître pour le char de La Fidélité. Elle est assise dedans, et couronnée de fleurs immortelles. Deux chiens d'or lui servent d'appui, et ce char est traîné par deux autres qui sont marquetés de blanc et de noir, symboles de la fidélité. Il est environné de quatre personnes représentant les quatre parties du monde, pour montrer que cette déesse est adorée partout. Ces quatre personnes tiennent chacune un guidon ornée d'une foi

⁸⁰ See Jaques Vanuxem, 'Emblèmes et devises vers 1600-1680', Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de l'art français (1964), pp. 60-70; and Daniel S. Russell, The Emblem and Device in France (Lexington, Kentucky, 1985).

couronnée, et d'une devise qui a pour corps un rocher battu des ondes.... (p. 47).

The chariot was the work of the sculptor François Fontel and cost the Guénégaud company 90 livres.⁸¹

Although enjoying a similar setting to L'Inconnu, as with the décors, the use of stage machinery in Le Triomphe des dames was on a far grander scale. Thus, in preparation for the Act IV divertissement:

... ceux que le Capitaine a préposés pour la mascarade, font avancer le Palais des Jeux, qui est composé de colonnes torsées de marbre blanc, environnées de feuillages d'or, avec leurs chapiteaux et bases d'or. La corniche est de marbre blanc, et la frise de porphyre. Ces colonnes sont disposées de deux en deux de chaque côté, avec des figures au naturel entre les deux, représentant des empereurs, des rois, des princes, des reines et des princesses, et tenant chacune des cartes, pour faire voir qu'elles servent au plaisir de tout le monde. Sur la corniche de ce palais, au lieu d'attique, sont des figures de marbre blanc ornées de draperies d'or. Elles représentent la Déesse des Richesses, La Prodigalité, La Nuit, La Vigilance, Le Destin, La Constance, Le Temps, La Fortune, Momus, L'Espérance et La Subtilité, comme autant de divinités qui tiennent les joueurs sous leur dépendance. Les cartes que les figures d'en bas exposent aux yeux des spectateurs, sont couronnées par les figures d'en haut, qui d'une main tiennent des couronnes, et de l'autre soutiennent une frise en forme de console couchée, ornée de feuillages de différentes couleurs, d'enfants tenant des jeux de toutes sortes, et de cartouches rehaussées d'or, et remplies pareillement de jeux. L'optique de ce palais est de même ordre; on y voit une porte ornée de jeux de coloris sur un fond de marbre blanc, et le dessus de cette porte est orné de plusieurs vases de lapis et de festons. (pp. 22-3)

The description of this palace in the 'Devis de peinture' as it is interpreted by Sylvie Chevalley is slightly different:

Le palais des jeux est orné de chaque côté de cinq colonnes de marbre blanc ornées de feuillage d'or, les chapiteaux, les bases ainsi que les consoles sur lesquelles sont posés les quatre rois et les quatre dames du jeu de piquet sont rehaussés d'or. Au sommet de chaque colonne est

⁸¹ Chevalley, 'Triomphe', p. 381. Fontel's name also appears in the 'Etat de la dépense faite pour représenter Psyché au théâtre des Tuileries en 1671' (Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 499).

une figure à genoux, peinte; d'une main elle soutient le plafond, de l'autre elle tient une couronne de laurier d'or au-dessus de la figure de la Jeunesse, ou de la Fortune, de Momus, du Destin, du Temps, de la Joie, de la Nuit, de la Vigilance. Sur les frises sont représentés des enfants tenant divers 'instruments à jouer'. Dans la perspective, quatre colonnes ornées de valets de pique couronnés par des enfants qui représentent les Ris. (p. 380)

It is, of course, possible to see in this palace and the mascarade for which it provided the décor, a reflection of the contemporary passion for cards.

Despite his authenticity in the inclusion of machinery, in Le Triomphe des dames Thomas Corneille was forced to deviate from his sources concerning 'combats à la barrière' in one important respect, namely the addition of music, as he makes clear in his introduction to the work: 'Je sais qu'on y faisait entrer la musique, et souhaiterais fort n'avoir pas été obligé de pécher contre cette règle'. This omission was imposed by the fact that Le Triomphe des dames saw for the first time the ordonnances issued in Lully's favour being scrupulously applied. This was, however, only after the Guénégaud company had done everything in their power to prevent it, including making two trips to petition the King in person. Thus, on 7 July 1676, Dauvilliers and La Grange travelled to Compiègne 'pour aller demander au Roi permission de mettre deux voix dans la pièce'.⁸² The King was further petitioned at Saint-Germain-en-Laye on 10 July 1676, and a trip was made to Versailles to receive his answer on 22 August 1676.⁸³ This evidently confirmed the terms of Lully's ordonnances in one respect, in that the Guénégaud were not able to hire professional singers for this production. This did not, however, mean that Le Triomphe des dames was completely devoid of vocal

⁸² Ibid., p. 382. The identity of the two petitioners is given by La Grange (Registre, I, 184), who gives the purpose of their trip as being 'pour demander permission pour la musique et la danse'.

⁸³ Chevalley, 'Triomphe', p. 382.

and instrumental music. The score for the work was again composed by Charpentier, for which he received 143 livres, and was performed by the six violons allowed - four at 3 livres per performance and two at 2 livres 5 sols.⁸⁴

Of particular interest is the means by which episodes of vocal music were included in Le Triomphe des dames in such a way as to turn the lack of professional singers to the company's best advantage. In Act I, Fanchon, the youngest of the Baron's nieces, played by 'la petite Mademoiselle Dupin',⁸⁵ picks up a paper bearing the title 'Chanson sur l'air de: vous étonnez-vous'. She recognizes this as one of the tunes from Circé, and takes the paper to one side to study it. Meanwhile, her sister Ismène, played by Mlle Molière, orders her lover Dorante, played by La Grange, to sing the song which he claims to have composed for her:

Ainsi il commence deux fois à chanter ces paroles: L'excès de mon amour ..., et s'étant interrompu deux fois lui-même sur ce que dans le chagrin où il est, il a la voix pitoyable, Ismène s'offense de ce refus, et sans lui rien dire davantage, elle s'adresse à Fanchon pour la faire chanter. Fanchon, qui a assez étudié les paroles qu'elle a trouvées, chante les quatre premiers vers. Dorante fort surpris de les entendre, et les reconnaissant, parce qu'il les a faits autrefois pour Clarice, interromp Fanchon, à qui Ismène fait recommencer (pp. 5-6)

Similarly, in Act III, the divertissement takes the form of a comic country wedding reception:

⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. 382-3.

⁸⁵ The livre de sujet of Le Triomphe des dames is unique among those for Thomas Corneille's machine plays in that the list of characters also indicates by which member of the Guénégaud company each was played: Aminte - Mlle De Brie; Ismène - Mlle Molière; Fanchon - 'la petite Mlle Dupin'; Angélique - Angélique Du Croisy; Clarice - Mlle Dupin; Lucile - Mlle Auzillon; Le Baron - Du Croisy; Dorante - La Grange; Le Capitaine - Hubert; Damis - Dauvilliers; La Mariée - Mlle Dauvilliers; Dorimène - Mlle La Grange; Colin - Guérin d'Estriché; Gros-Jean - Rosimond; Pierrette, la mère du marié - Dupin; M. Vignolet, bourgeois niais - Verneuil.

... les violons qu'on entend, donnent le signal de l'entrée de la noce. Ils marchent les premiers, et sont suivis d'un paysan ivre. Après lui vient le marié, menant Dorimène, femme du bel-air, que le Capitaine a qualifiée du titre de demi-Marquise, dans le récit qu'il a fait de la noce. M. Vignolet, bourgeois niais les suit. Il mène la mariée, dont la mère est menée par un vieux bourgeois. Le père du marié entre après eux, avec une vieille bourgeoise qu'il tient par la main. Ensuite on voit paraître un bourgeois galant, et un clerc de procureur, qui mènent chacun une fille de village. Une servante finit cette entrée. Un Suisse et un page la tiennent chacun par la main. Toute cette troupe se place, et la plupart d'eux font tour à tour les figures les plus plaisantes ..., jusqu'à ce que M. Vignolet étant prié de danser, s'en excuse, et pour en être plus aisément dispensé, il s'offre à chanter

Cette chanson étant finie, on apporte une table et un bassin, dans lequel tous les conviés vont mettre les présents que la coutume les engage de faire aux mariés; ils sont tous deux au devant de la table, et font la révérence à chacun de ceux qui viennent mettre leurs dons dans le bassin, après quoi toute cette troupe se retire (pp. 17-9)

M. Vignolet was played by Verneuil, and his song began with the lines 'Si Claudine ma voisine'.⁸⁶ This episode of the country wedding was almost certainly inspired by Brécourt's comedy La Noce de village, performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1666, and still in the repertory of the Comédie-Française in 1682 and 1689. This work concludes with just such a festival.⁸⁷ When L'Inconnu was revived in 1679, the country wedding from Le Triomphe des dames was, with certain alterations,

⁸⁶ See Hitchcock, Oeuvres, p. 375.

⁸⁷ Lancaster, History, III, 670-1.

substituted for the inner play of Act V - no doubt a sign of its popularity.⁸⁸

Here, therefore, two different devices are being used as a means of making up for a lack of skill on the part of the performers: firstly, the integration of musical episodes into the plot in such a way that a less than perfect rendition would be acceptable or even desirable; and, secondly, the use of music for comic effect. The contrast with the formal dialogues of pastoral inspiration which had been a feature of earlier machine plays including Circé, and also, to a certain extent, L'Inconnu, could not be more marked. Songs of this sort were probably not, however, entirely eliminated from Le Triomphe des dames, for the songs of the King and Queen of Clubs which feature in the mascarade in Act IV, may well have been of such a type.

From the description of the country wedding divertissement above, we see that, despite the clause in the ordonnance of 30 April 1673, the Guénégaud company continued its use of dancers in Le Triomphe des dames. This was most marked in the mascarade in Act IV, which took the form of an elaborate entrée de ballet designed to demonstrate the superiority of cards over other previously fashionable games. After the appearance of the Palais des Jeux:

... les quatre valets paraissent tels qu'ils sont
représentés dans les cartes. Ils tiennent chacun leur

⁸⁸ In the revised version, the ball is opened by the bride's mother, who is first refused by the Marquis and the Chevalier, before dancing with the Vicomte. He then dances with the bride, and they are succeeded by the bridegroom Colin and other guests. Dorimène is no longer present, and the 'bourgeois niais', while anonymous, is described by the Vicomte as a Thomas Diafoirus. The song he sings is, however, the same. Colin then asks the Comtesse to dance with him, but is reduced to dancing alone. He is followed by the drunken Suisse and the peasant. Finally, the Vicomte engages in badinage with 'une paysanne bavolette', who rejects him with a song, 'Ne fripez pas mon bavolet' (See Hitchcock, Oeuvres, p. 375). The celebration concludes in the same way, with the presentation of gifts to the happy couple (Dessein, pp. 5-6).

halebarde, avec laquelle ils font des figures très agréables, pour mettre tout en ordre avant l'entrée des rois qui se fait de cette manière. Le valet de trèfle paraît le premier, la halebarde sur l'épaule. Il précède le roi de cette couleur, qui mène la dame par la main, dont la queue est portée par un esclave représentant la paume. On voit ensuite le valet de coeur, faisant faire place au roi qui mène la dame, dont la queue est portée par un esclave qui représente le jeu de dames et du trictrac. Le valet, le roi et la dame de pique, viennent après, faisant la même figure ^e que les précédents, et la queue de la dame est portée par un esclave représentant le jeu de dés. Le valet, le roi et la dame de carreau se font voir ensuite dans le même ordre, et l'esclave qui porte la queue de la dame représente le jeu du billard. Toute cette troupe ayant fait le tour du théâtre, se range en demi-cercle. (pp. 23-4)

There then follow the songs previously mentioned, after which, 'les quatre rois prenant les quatre dames par la main, figurent ensemble. Ils forment ensemble quatre tierces, les valets allant devant, puis trois quatorzes. Ensuite ils font leur figure deux à deux, tout le rouge d'un côté, et le noir de l'autre; puis ils se mêlent tous douze ensemble sans se tenir' (p. 25). To perform in these balletic entertainments, a number of dancers or marcheurs were hired: ten receiving 3 livres per performance, and twenty-eight receiving 15 sols.⁸⁹ References in the Registres to rehearsal for dancers and musicians occur in June and July 1676, when on 28 June 1676, 6 livres 10 sols were paid 'au cabaretier pour la pièce nouvelle pour les répétitions des danseurs et violons', 30 sols were paid for refreshments for the dancers and 16 sols for the band at a rehearsal on 25 July 1676, and again 30 sols for the dancers on 26 July 1676 (R IV, 32, 41 v°).

The marcheurs were also employed in the fifth act spectacle of the combat à la barrière which provided Thomas Corneille with the raison d'être for his work. This consisted, for the most part, of a parade of sumptuously dressed officials, followed by the quadrille of tenants and the two quadrilles of assaillants, all preceded by drums and trumpets,

⁸⁹ Chevalley, 'Triomphe', p. 383.

and followed by their various attendants bearing emblematic banners. This was set against the décor of the dais previously described, and still more splendour was contributed by the appearance of the Char de la Fidélité as part of the parade. The following description of the entry of the 'quadrille des tenants' provides an illustration of the type of spectacle to be enjoyed:

... deux Maures apportent la barrière, et l'ayant placée au milieu du camp, la quadrille des tenants fait son entrée en cet ordre. On voit d'abord paraître trois trompettes avec des banderoles incarnat et blanc, sur chacune desquelles est une différente devise des deux côtés en l'honneur des dames

Ces trompettes ont la livrée des tenants, et leur garniture est incarnat et blanc, aussi bien que les plumes de leurs casques. Le Maréchal de camp paraît ensuite avec son bâton de commandement. Il est suivi de ses deux estafiers maures après lesquels marche un esclave maure qui porte le drapeau. Il est incarnat et blanc, et on y voit peintes dans les quatre coins ... quatre devises à l'avantage du beau sexe

On voit paraître ensuite le parain du chef vêtu à l'antique, avec sa garniture et ses plumes de la livrée de la quadrille. Il a au lieu d'un casque une toque garnie de plumes. L'écuyer vient après; c'est un nain qui porte l'écu de son maître, sous lequel il semble tout caché. La Fortune y est peinte pour devise

Deux licteurs marchent après ce nain avec des faisceaux d'armes dorés, et précédant le chef des tenants superbement vêtu à la romaine, et tenant une pique à la main. Sa mante est incarnat et argent; elle est à longue queue, portée par un page aussi vêtu à l'antique. Les trois tenants paraissent, laissant un peu de distance après lui. Ils marchent l'un après l'autre, ayant leur garniture incarnat et blanc aussi bien que les plumes de leurs casques, avec <d>es devises sur leurs boucliers (pp. 34-7)

The daily expenses for the production of Le Triomphe des dames included 10 livres for 'trompettes et timbales', and preparations included thirty-one days' work by Mme Desbarres on the 'couture des toiles des décorations, bordure des drapeaux, guidons et écus des chevaliers, garniture de franges d'argent'.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 381, 383.

Le Triomphe des dames was first performed on 7 August 1676, after two days' closure for technical rehearsals. After being given seven times consecutively, however, performances had to be suspended owing to the illness of Mlle Molière. The play re-opened on 28 August 1767, and was given four times, but was not then performed for eleven weeks. Finally, it was revived on 20 November, and was given fifteen consecutive performances.⁹¹ This revival was announced in the Gazette d'Amsterdam of 3 November 1676 in the following terms:

Le combat à la barrière, intitulé Le Triomphe des dames, dont la grande dépense a fait ici tant de bruit, et dont la maladie d'une actrice avait fait interrompre les représentations, paraît depuis peu dans une comédie nouvelle intitulée Le Paladin extravagant. Cette pièce est remplie de spectacles qui n'y étaient pas dans la première, et l'on s'y divertit d'autant plus que plusieurs vieux seigneurs de ce siècle, ne sont pas moins entêtés de la chevalerie ancienne, que l'on était du temps de l'Arioste et des Amadis.

There is every likelihood, however, that this was merely a publicity stunt, and that Le Triomphe des dames was revived in exactly the same form as that in which it had been seen before, Le Paladin extravagant being the title by which it was popularly known.⁹²

The average of the takings at the twenty-six performances of Le Triomphe des dames was 536 livres 6 sols, which can be considered, in the words of Sylvie Chevalley, as a 'chiffre honorable, mais très inférieur aux chiffres moyens des recettes pour Circé ou L'Inconnu' (p. 383). There may be several explanations of this comparative lack of success. Firstly, the fact that the play was given its première during the summer, rather than in the winter as was the case with the majority of other machine plays. Secondly, the restrictions on the amount of music the company were able to introduce. Thirdly, the somewhat stately

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 383.

⁹² Ibid., p. 384.

and repetitive nature of the spectacle it contained; the emphasis on fixed décors, formal dances and processions to be found here, being infinitely removed from the changements à vue, flights and apparitions of Circé, or even the sparkling entertainments and transformations of L'Inconnu. Finally, however, we must bear in mind that public taste is never constant. We have already discussed the possibility of a swing on the part of the audiences towards tragedy and other more serious forms of entertainment, and noted that the Guénégaud company, from 1677-8 onwards, began to modify their repertory so as to take this into account. It is, therefore, possible to see in the comparative lack of success of Le Triomphe des dames, a manifestation of this gradual disaffection on the part of the public from the machine play.

LA DEVINERESSE


Given the somewhat hesitant reception accorded to Le Triomphe des dames, it is perhaps not surprising that Thomas Corneille should have chosen to turn from the machine play and attempt other genres. As we have seen, for the two seasons 1677-8 and 1678-9, there was no new machine play given at the Guénégaud, and the company were forced to content themselves with revivals of certain of Thomas Corneille's earlier works, and revivals of other works with spectacular elements, notably Molière's Le Malade imaginaire and Le Festin de pierre in Thomas Corneille's verse adaptation; Quinault's Les Coups de l'amour et de la fortune, with its many different décors including one of a burning palace; and Montauban's Les Charmes de Félicie, in which Diana appears in the heavens in her chariot. It was not until 1679-80 that Thomas can be said to have attempted the genre of the machine play once more, with the production of La Devineresse. There is, however, some doubt as to whether even the latter work can accurately be described as a machine play. Donneau De Visé himself, in Le Mercure galant of February 1680,

comments on the work's success in the following terms: 'comme on en a commencé les représentations en novembre, et qu'elles ne finiront qu'en mars, on voit ce qui n'est arrivé à aucune pièce sans machines, qui est d'être jouée pendant cinq mois différents' (p. 344). In his pre-production article of August 1679, however, he refers to the work as if it were a machine play of an unusual kind: 'Je ne sais pas bien encore ce que c'est; mais ^{de} la manière qu'on m'en a parlé, les spectacles de cette pièce approchent fort des choses que je vous viens de conter. Si cela est, il vaudra bien les machines ordinaires' (pp. 51-2). And there can be little doubt that spectacle was not least among La Devineresse's many attractions.

Nevertheless, the spectacle in La Devineresse is on a far reduced scale from that to be found in even L'Inconnu. And when Thomas Corneille in his Au lecteur, makes the claim which we have already heard from Pierre Corneille and Donneau De Visé, as to the absolute indivisibility of the spectacle from his subject, he can be seen to be totally justified. He writes: 'Quant au spectacle, il n'y a point été mis pour faire paraître les ornements, mais comme absolument nécessaire, la plupart des devineresses s'étant servies de bassins pleins d'eau, de miroirs, et d'autres choses de cette nature, pour abuser le public' (p. 6). Indeed, one could almost describe the play as a comedy with conjuring tricks, since these are for the most part, precisely the types of effects we find created. As H.C. Lancaster notes, 'Each act contains a mechanical device to attract the eye, as the earlier "machine" plays had done, but here all of them are employed at the protagonist's command'.⁹³ Thus, while the décor remains constant representing Mme Jobin's home and business premises, in Act I, scene 15, when La Giraudière consults the devineresse as to the theft of a pair of

⁹³ History, IV, 919.

pistols, 'On laisse tomber un zigzag du haut du plancher qui tient une toile, sur laquelle sont peints deux pistolets sur une table'; and when the gentleman enquires as to the perpetrator of the crime: 'Le même zigzag fait voir un portrait'.⁹⁴ In Act II, scene 12, the swelling of the body of one of Mme Jobin's associates, Dame Françoise, is ^Psupposedly _Lpassed by magic to that of another; and in the following scene, there occurs the trick already described, by which the Chevalier appears to the Marquise in a mirror, seems to receive her letter and she his reply instantaneously.

In Acts III and IV, the spectacle is more elaborate, requiring the use of such specifically theatrical devices as lighting and sound effects. In Act III, scene 11, in order to impress the Marquis, 'La Devineresse paraît en furie, marche avec précipitation, regarde en haut et en bas, marmote ^tquelques paroles, après quoi on entend le tonnerre et on voit de grands éclairs dans la cheminée'. First an arm, then a thigh, and other dismembered limbs fall down the chimney. Mme Jobin 'fait signe de la main. Le tonnerre et les éclairs redoublent, et pendant ce temps les parties du corps s'approchent, se rejoignent, le corps se lève, marche et vient jusqu'au milieu du théâtre'. After which, 'le corps s'abîme au milieu du théâtre'. Lighting effects would seem to have been  a feature of Act IV, scene 9, as is indicated by the stage direction that 'une nuit paraît', followed by the comment of Mme Jobin, 'Voici la lune'. The spectacle here is highly reminiscent of an entrée de ballet, as a number of figures pass over the stage: 'une figure de bouc', 'une figure de caprice', 'un démon ... avec une bourse ouverte', 'une autre figure ... ayant une épée à ses pieds', and 'plusieurs figures de femmes

⁹⁴ An illustration of a zigzag in use is provided by the frontispiece to Raymond Poisson's comedy Le Zigzag; see A. Ross Curtis, 'A propos d'une gravure de 1662', Revue d'histoire du théâtre, 19 (1967), pp. 97-8.

... l'une après l'autre'. The spectacle returns to the level of the conjuring trick, however, in Act V, scene 4, when a table is brought onstage bearing a disembodied head, which proceeds to turn itself to right and left, roll its eyes and even speak. Finally, in the following scene, M. Gosselin, Mme Jobin's brother, 'commence à paraître vêtu en diable', while 'il sort des éclairs des deux côtés de la trappe'. He is soon, however, unmasked by the Marquis. The Mémoire de Mahelot records that for La Devineresse: 'Théâtre est une chambre. Premier acte, il faut un tabouret, un bassin et de l'eau dedans, 2 zigzags. 2, la ferme et le miroir, une table. 3 acte, la cheminée et le corps par morceaux, 2 trappes, l'enflure, la chaire. 4, la nuit et les illuminations. 5, la table, la tête, la ferme blanche' (pp. 129-30).

In contrast with those works previously studied, even those produced after the imposition of still more stringent measures controlling the use of stage music, the musical content of La Devineresse was limited indeed. The work contains just one song, in Act III, scene 9, when Mme Des Roches asks Mme Jobin to improve her singing voice, and the fortune teller requires her to sing, 'afin que selon ce que votre voix a déjà de force et de douceur, j'ajoute ou diminue dans la composition du sirop'. Again, as in Le Triomphe des dames, the absence of professional musicians is covered for in the text. Mme Des Roches protests that she has a cold, adding modestly after her song is completed, 'Cela n'est pas tout à fait chanter, mais...'. Nevertheless, La Devineresse would almost certainly have included a certain amount of instrumental incidental music, particularly to provide an atmospheric background to certain of the special effects.

Unfortunately, by the time of the production of La Devineresse, the Guénégaud company had ceased the practice of copying into their Registres details of the frais extraordinaires relating to the

preparation of spectacular productions. Nor did they note the breakdown of the daily frais ordinaires. We have, therefore, virtually no information as to how the effects listed above were created. We do, however, have a very good idea of how they would have appeared on the stage, thanks to the 'Almanach de La Devineresse', which features illustrations of eight of the most spectacular scenes from the comedy.⁹⁵

As we have seen, the ostensible aim of the authors of La Devineresse was that of disabusing the public as to the folly of consulting fortune tellers. They were, however, no doubt equally if not more motivated by the thought of the financial gain to ~~be~~ ^{from} accrued ~~by~~ the exploitation of such a topical subject. Nevertheless, it is interesting that here, for the first time we find an attempt to imbue the machine play with a social utility, and we should also note that this, as we saw above, was invoked specifically to justify the inclusion of spectacular effects, with Thomas asserting the authenticity of tricks involving basins of water, false mirrors and the like. Evidently, a delight in the spectacular for its own sake was no longer considered sufficient.

With La Devineresse, therefore, the machine play would appear to have come full circle. In Circé, it was the presence of the enchantress that enabled the presentation of elaborate special effects on stage. Here it is the avowedly false magic of Mme Jobin that has a similar result. The machine play has well and truly quitted the universe of mythology, to take its place in the harsh and cynical world of reality. This necessarily, would have affected the way those spectacular effects contained within the work were viewed. In La Devineresse we are presented with a theatrical illusion that is perceived as such; the spectacle consists of a series of tricks that are known to be tricks. It could be said, therefore, that the consciously theatrical magic of

⁹⁵ Dubois et al, 'Almanach'.

L'Inconnu has here been taken to its logical conclusion, but that, whereas in the former work there was a simple delight in the theatrical illusion as an illusion, with no questioning of the means by which it was created, here the attention of the audience would have been focussed on the mechanisms behind the illusion. This would have been all the more acute in that these mechanisms can be said to be operating on two levels: the methods used by the Guénégaud company to present these tricks for their audiences are the same as those used by Mme Jobin to deceive her clients. What is more, the presence of the sceptical Marquis as an observer within the play could be said to parallel the public within the Guénégaud theatre in whom this attitude of scepticism was deliberately being inculcated.

Given the notoriety of its subject, and the degree of publicity provided by Donneau De Visé in Le Mercure galant, La Devineresse was, not surprisingly, an outstanding success, being given an astonishing forty-seven consecutive performances, and with average takings during this first run of 1,051 livres 10 sols, as compared to an overall average for the season of 687 livres 15 sols..

LA PIERRE PHILOSOPHALE

Thomas Corneille's final machine play, La Pierre philosophale, falls outside the main scope of this study in that it was performed in 1681, after the merger of the Guénégaud and Hôtel de Bourgogne companies had brought about the creation of the Comédie-Française. It will be considered briefly, however, to conclude our examination of the author's work in this genre.

With La Pierre philosophale, which takes as its subject the mysterious sect of the Rosicrucians and the search for the philosopher's stone, Thomas Corneille and Donneau De Visé appear to have attempted to

repeat the success of La Devineresse. Certainly, Thomas claims in his Au lecteur to have written it with a similarly didactic purpose:

Comme il y a beaucoup de folie parmi ceux qui veulent trouver quelque vérité dans les extravagantes imaginations des Cabalistes, on a cru qu'une satire publique était l'unique moyen de les faire revenir dans leur bon sens. C'est par là qu'on corrige plus aisément les faiblesses et les vices, et c'est par là que la comédie devient d'une grande utilité.

However, as Lancaster points out, despite its title, La Pierre philosophale deals more with the Rosicrucians than with alchemical experiments, and if these people were such a social menace, there would not have been the need for Thomas to explain in such detail in his livre de sujet exactly who they were.⁹⁶ Indeed, it was for this purpose alone that the livre de sujet appeared, for, as Thomas noted in his introduction, 'Les livres de sujet, ne se font ordinairement que pour des pièces remplies de chansons, ou d'un grand spectacle. Il y a peu de chant dans celle-ci, et quoique les ornements en soient singuliers, les chansons et les machines demandent moins qu'on donne ce livre au public, que la nouveauté de la matière'. Here, as with Le Triomphe des dames, Thomas gives the sources of his information: Jean Bringern's L'Histoire des Frères de la Rose-Croix (Frankfurt, 1615) and Naudé's Instruction à la France sur la vérité de l'histoire des Frères de la Rose-Croix (Paris, 1623). One source unmentioned by Thomas, however, is Montfauca^on de Villar's Le Comte de Gabalis ou Entretiens sur les sciences secrètes of 1670. Roger Laufer, in his edition of this work, seriously underestimates the debt owed to it by Thomas, seeing it only as the inspiration behind the inclusion of the character of a sylph.⁹⁷ In fact,

⁹⁶ History, IV, 920.

⁹⁷ Montfauca^on de Villars, Le Comte de Gabalis. La Critique de Bérénice, edited by Roger Laufer (Paris, 1963), p. 48.

the Comte de Gabalis himself appears in La Pierre philosophale, together with numerous sylphs, gnomes and salamanders, two of the acts of the play actually being set in his home; and several of the scenes of Thomas's play can be seen to have been suggested by Montfaucon's work. What is more, Le Comte de Gabalis may have provided Thomas with rather more than merely ideas for new spectacular episodes, since, in the words of Roger Laufer, it is 'le premier grand livre de l'époque dans lequel le nouveau merveilleux, raisonnable et fantaisiste s'exprime sans les entraves philosophiques qui brident souvent les belles imaginations de Cyrano de Bergerac' (p. 45). It was precisely this new 'merveilleux' that Thomas was to exploit in both La Devineresse and La Pierre philosophale.

Unlike La Devineresse, the spectacular effects called for in La Pierre philosophale were highly elaborate. The play concerns a deception practised upon M. Maugis, a searcher for the philosopher's stone, by the Comte de Gabalis, in order that there might be a double marriage between the Marquis and Maugis's daughter, and the Chevalier and the daughter of Maugis's associate. It is set in three different locations: Acts I and II in the home of M. Maugis, Acts III and IV in that of the Comte de Gabalis, and Act V in a ruined castle to which M. Maugis is lured by the promise of buried treasure. Spectacular effects occur in all but the second of these acts, and, once more, elaborate décors and stage machinery were of prime importance. For example, in Act I, M. Maugis and his daughter Angélique pass from an antichamber into the former's laboratory:

... ils entrent dans une chambre fort propre. Elle est toute boisée avec des panneaux. Les volets de la cheminée se retirent, et laissent voir un grand fourneau qui roule jusqu'au milieu de la chambre. La table et les meubles deviennent des fourneaux, et tous les panneaux qui tenaient lieu de tapisserie, ne paraissent plus, en sorte qu'on ne

voit que creusets en un lieu, où un moment auparavant, on voyait toute autre chose. (p. 7)

In Act III, as we have seen, the Comte de Gabalis persuades M. Maugis that he is about to be received into the order of Rosicrucians. The décor of this act consists of a garden in which there is a dolphin and a grotto. The Comte orders M. Maugis to sit on the dolphin, which will transport him to another garden on high. As Maugis begins to mount the dolphin, 'des vases qui ornaient le jardin s'élèvent et paraissent hommes'. The Comte tells him that there never were any vases, but that these are members of the order he was not yet knowledgeable ^{enough} to be able to see. A gnome and a gnomide conduct Maugis to the raised garden, where he is greeted by a salamander and a sylph, and further elevated by means of a special seat. He is given a cap and a cloak covered with roses, and is told that he is to be transported to the grotto where the founder of the order is buried. This appears below the raised garden, and in it are to be seen 'un soleil dans le fond. Au milieu est un tombeau, avec un globe de la terre au dessous, deux lampes antiques aux côtés, des glaces en triangle, des livres, des clochettes, et trois inscriptions sur le devant'. As Maugis emerges, 'la grotte se referme incontinent' (pp. 18-9).

Act IV contains those limited items of music and dance mentioned by Thomas Corneille in his Au lecteur. Maugis has been told that he may marry an elemental spirit:

... on voit tout à coup une machine composée des quatre éléments, de la grandeur d'un Mont Parnasse. Le bas représente la terre, sur laquelle sont un gnome et une gnomide. Un peu plus haut on remarque l'eau par ses bouillons, car on la voit effectivement rouler. Un ondin et une ondine sont sur cet élément. L'air est au-dessus, avec un sylphe et une sylphide; et en regardant encore plus haut,

on y découvre le feu, au milieu duquel sont deux salamandres de l'un et de l'autre sexe. (p. 24)⁹⁸

Maugis having chosen a 'petite gnomide' to be his wife,⁹⁹ and his daughter, Marianne, the Marquis disguised as a sylph for her husband, the Comte 'ordonne aux peuples des quatre éléments, qui ne se sont point encore rendus visibles, de se joindre à ceux qui ont paru sur la machine, afin d'augmenter la joie de ces doubles fiançailles' (p. 25). These come forward and sing. The little gnomide then dances a minuet, the Marquis sings to Marianne, 'les quatre éléments dansent ensuite, et leur danse étant finie, un salamandre et un ondin chantent'. The scene concludes with a chorus of all the elements together. The music for La Pierre philosopale was again provided by Charpentier.¹⁰⁰ According to the score, two of the singers to appear in this divertissement were the Guénégaud company members Hubert and Verneuil, for again no professional vocalists were hired. One further song was included in Act IV of La Pierre philosopale, being used to cover a transformation. The little gnomide had promised Maugis that if he selected her as his bride she

⁹⁸ The Comte de Gabalis explains to M. Maugis that, 'les quatre éléments sont peuplés d'habitants invisibles, chacun composé des plus pures parties de son élément; ... que ces peuples ont accoutumé de vivre des mille années'. This is clearly derived from the following words of the Comte from Montfaucon's work: 'les éléments sont habités par des créatures très-parfaites, ... étant composé des plus pures parties des éléments qu'ils habitent ... ils ne meurent qu'après plusieurs siècles' (pp. 78-9).

⁹⁹ Maugis chooses a gnomide because he has been told that they have 'la garde des trésors, et que la moindre d'entr'elles lui en fera plus découvrir qu'il ne lui en faut pour se satisfaire'. In Le Comte de Gabalis, the Comte informs his interlocutor that gnomes are 'gens de petite stature, gardiens des trésors, des minières, et des pierreries', and that they are 'ingénieux, amis de l'homme, et faciles à commander. Ils fournissent aux enfants des sages tout l'argent qui leur est nécessaire, et ne demandent guère pour prix de leur service, que la gloire d'être commandés' (pp. 78-9).

¹⁰⁰ See Hitchcock, Oeuvres, p. 377.

would change her size.¹⁰¹ When asked to do so, 'Elle répond que la terre étant son élément elle y rentre pour en sortir telle qu'il souhaite. Elle disparaît aussitôt, et une grande personne s'élève peu à peu de terre. On découvre d'abord le visage, et un peu après tout le corps' (p. 26). As the actress gradually rises through the trap, the assembled 'spirits' sing 'Croissez, Gnomide, croissez'.

It is in Act V, however, that the spectacle is at its most elaborate. Indeed, in Lancaster's view, the décor of this act is worthy of an early nineteenth-century melodrama.¹⁰² Also, lighting effects appear to have been used to the full, together with small machines. The setting is a ruined castle, where Maugis has been led to search for buried treasure:

Le théâtre représente la salle d'un vieux château ruiné, l'herbe qui y a poussé en plusieurs endroits fait assez voir que ces ruines sont vieilles. Quelques pierres à demi détachées de leur place semblent prêtes à tomber. Elles ont même éboulé un endroit proche de la voûte, et fait un trou assez grand, au travers duquel on voit l'air; et comme il fait nuit lorsqu'on vient, on remarque le croissant au-delà du château. La voûte de cette salle, qui a été aussi ruinée par le temps, laisse voir le ciel et les étoiles. On découvre une porte surbaissée, qui paraît conduire dans un autre lieu qu'on doit avoir pratiqué sous terre. (p. 29)

While the Comte and the Marquis, both equipped with 'lanternes sourdes', are discussing their plans as to how to trick Maugis into giving his consent to the marriage of his daughter, 'ils découvrent de la lumière par le trou'. Maugis and his valet, Crispin, not knowing of the secret door by which the others entered, find themselves forced to climb down from the hole high in the wall. By the light of a 'flambeau', they see 'des pierres qui avancent, et sur lesquelles il leur est aisé

¹⁰¹ The narrator of Montfaucon's Le Comte de Gabalis is told that 'les gnomides ... sont petites, mais fort agréables' (p. 79).

¹⁰² History, IV, 921.

de mettre les pieds' (p. 30). No sooner have they reached ground level, than a number of owls 'volent autour d'eux avec des battements d'ailes', which only serves to redouble Crispin's fear, and all the more so when, despite all their precautions, 'un des hiboux éteint le flambeau avec ses ailes'. In the darkness, they attempt to get back up to the hole from which they had descended. However, 'Comme ils en approchent, la muraille s'ouvre, et ils aperçoivent une figure tout en feu. Elle est de relief, et paraît aussi brûlante que si elle était composée de charbons ardents.... Cette figure leur ayant causé toutes les frayeurs imaginables disparaît un peu après' (p. 31). Maugis attempts to calm Crispin, saying that he has no doubt that the gnomide is protecting them, offering this as an explanation for their being able to see a little better, despite there being no obvious source of light. A moment later, however, while feeling along the walls in an attempt to discover a hole where the treasure might be hidden, 'Crispin reçoit un soufflet par une main qui sort de cette muraille.... Dans cet instant les lumières se retirent, et l'on voit paraître dans la muraille des lettres en feu. Elles forment ces paroles: "Levez la pierre qui est au milieu de cette salle". No sooner have they obeyed this instruction, 'qu'il sort de ce trou un grand nombre de reptiles'. Crispin and Maugis both run towards the wall, one to each side, 'et il en sort deux serpents ailés qui jettent du feu et qui sifflent'. And as the light returns and Crispin attempts to reascend the wall, 'il trouve un autre serpent qui se roule sur son passage' (p. 32). Maugis returns to the hole from which they had removed the stone, and says that he can see a corpse dressed as a Roman senator. He forces Crispin to help him lift the body from the hole. They carry it to the front of the stage, where the body stands alone, and begins to speak, telling them that the treasure is in the hole from which they have taken him. He orders them to kiss him to show

their thanks, and when Crispin does so, he finds only the body's cloak between his hands. The treasure is revealed as 'des vases, et quelques coffrets pleins de diamants', but they are unable to remove it from its position. The gnomide enters at this point, and her supposed jealousy and her threat of depriving Maugis of his treasure are the means of persuading the latter to consent to the marriages between Marianne and the Marquis and Angélique and the Chevalier.¹⁰³

In La Pierre philosopale, therefore, Thomas Corneille and Donneau De Visé were clearly attempting to capitalize on the success enjoyed by La Devineresse, by producing a second work which sought to exploit the passion for the supernatural prevalent among certain sections of the public. As we have seen, Thomas claimed in his introduction to both works that his purpose in writing them was didactic. If so, he was operating a dual standard, in that both works relied for their appeal on precisely that fascination with the occult which caused people to consult fortune-tellers and search for the philosopher's stone in the first place, and which Thomas was supposedly decrying. Thus, if Act I of La Pierre philosopale prefigured the realist stage with its representation of burning furnaces, Act IV looked back to the traditional machine play with its globe of elemental spirits and music and dancing, and Act III back even further to the mysteries with its figuration of earth, paradise and the underworld; the appeal of Act V with its reptiles, owls and flying serpents which echo Circé, and its walking, talking body of a Roman senator which echoes Le Festin de pierre, must have been very much like that of the present day horror film.

¹⁰³ In the Mémoire de Mahelot, it is said that La Pierre philosopale requires: 'un fourneau, des châssis, marteau, coin, des soufflets, de la filasse, de l'esprit de vin' (p. 141).

La Pierre philosophale differs, however, from La Devineresse in certain important respects. In the latter work, the subject alone was enough to attract large audiences; some special effects were included, but these were little more than elaborate conjuring tricks. In La Pierre philosophale, on the other hand, the spectacular potential of a supernatural subject was exploited to the fullest extent. If magic had been the means of introducing spectacle in Circé, and false magic in La Devineresse, one could say that here it is false science that performs a similar function. In La Pierre philosophale, even more than in La Devineresse, the supposedly didactic nature of the work is a mere pretext. In the latter work, the Marquis is successful in revealing Mme Jobin as a fraud, and in making the Comtesse see the error of her ways. Here, as in Le Berger extravagant or Le Triomphe des dames, it is not felt to be necessary to disabuse the central character of his folly at the end of the play. The other characters have used Maugis's obsession to serve their own ends in very much the same way as the authors have used it as a means of introducing spectacle into their work. When all their objectives have been achieved and they are tired of having fun at his expense, both parties drop him where they found him. What is more, it is doubtful whether it is sufficient to instill a distrust of alchemy in an audience, that the other characters disagree with Maugis, and exploit his greed and gullibility rather more than his interest in alchemy as a means of getting the better of him.

In La Pierre philosophale the spectacular aspect is more developed than in any other of Thomas's works since Circé. Although the musical content was limited, the elaborate and changing décors, the presence of transformation scenes, elaborate machines, and, for the first time since Circé, flying machines, make it appear that in La Pierre philosophale,

Thomas was attempting a fusion of two of his greatest successes at the Guénégaud: Circé and La Devineresse.

It may come as a surprise, therefore, that La Pierre philosopale did not repeat the successes of these two works. In fact, it was withdrawn after only two performances, on 24 and 26 February 1681, the first of which attracted 102 spectators, and the second just sixteen.¹⁰⁴ This failure may have been on account of the plot of the play which is confusing and contrived, serving only to introduce the maximum number of spectacular effects. It cannot have been that the public's taste for such effects had been completely exhausted, for, as Lancaster points out, the Comédie-Française continued to revive with some success L'Inconnu and La Devineresse, as well as Gilbert's Les Amours de Diane et d'Endimion, De Visé's Le Mariage de Bacchus et d'Ariane and Pierre Corneille's Andromède and Psyché, on which he assisted Molière.¹⁰⁵ Whatever its cause, the failure of La Pierre philosopale was sufficient to discourage Thomas Corneille and Donneau De Visé from any further efforts in this genre, and no new machine plays were performed on the professional Parisian stage for the remainder of the century. Thus ended a genre which for over thirty years had existed in counterpoint to the classical drama with which the period is most often associated, and which had supplied the public with the spectacle the latter generally lacked. Although its most glorious successes had been enjoyed at the Marais theatre, even in its subsequent period of decline, stripped of many of its chief glories at the instigation of the jealous chief of the Académie Royale de Musique, in the hands of Thomas Corneille and Donneau De Visé, the machine play was still so successful as to

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 46.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., pp. 922-3. See also Lancaster's summary of other hypotheses as to the failure of La Pierre philosopale.

completely turn about the fortunes of the Guénégaud company, taking it from the brink of disaster to a position so powerful that it was able to successfully challenge the mighty Hôtel de Bourgogne.

CONCLUSION

The whole of the period examined above, from 1673 to 1680, can be seen to be characterized by two phenomena: the rise of the Guénégaud theatre and the decline of the Hôtel de Bourgogne. We have seen the extremely weak position occupied by the Guénégaud company in 1673, formed from the débris of two formerly great troupes: those of Molière and of the Marais. These had both previously found themselves in seemingly impossible situations. The limitations on the use of stage music imposed by Lully after his acquisition of Perrin's privilège on the production of opera had hit both of them very hard, making difficult the performance of Molière's ^Scomédie-ballets, and almost impossible that of the Marais's own speciality of the machine play. Molière's company had lost by his death its leader, chief playwright and director, and was soon further depleted by the transfer of four of its number to the Hôtel de Bourgogne. The Marais troupe had lost many of its best actors to the provinces and was further hit when one of its leading lights, Rosimond, was hired by Molière's company to replace its former leader. Molière's troupe was dispossessed of its theatre by Lully. The Marais company was in possession of a theatre in an unfashionable area of Paris where people were not prepared to travel. What is more, both companies were heavily in debt. Nevertheless, just seven years later, these two companies united at the Guénégaud were in so strong a position that it was the ancient and prestigious Hôtel de Bourgogne theatre that was closed down, and the members of the company performing there who were transferred to the Guénégaud so that it might become the first home of the Comédie-Française.

The facilities offered by the Guénégaud theatre itself, described as having been large and well-equipped, no doubt contributed to its

selection as the home for the single company of French actors to be allowed to operate in Paris henceforth. This theatre can also be said to have exerted a determining force over the behaviour of the company newly-established there in 1673, and can thus be seen to have played an important part in its success. A detailed examination of the information contained in the Registres of the Guénégaud company has enabled us for the first time to attempt a reconstruction of this theatre which occupies so crucial a position in the history of the French theatre as both the first home of the Paris Opera and the Comédie-Française. Not only was the Guénégaud significant historically, it is also of great importance in terms of the evolution of theatre design. Like so many other seventeenth-century theatres, it was an adaptation of a jeu de paume, but whereas in the majority of such adaptations the boxes constructed were identical in size and capacity, at the Guénégaud boxes were made available seating from four to twelve spectators. This has led us to suppose that they were arranged in a horse-shoe shape, rather than the more usual rectangle imposed by the original jeu de paume form. This is a feature more often associated with eighteenth-century theatre design, and the Guénégaud appears to have been forward-looking in another respect also, in that there for the first time loges d'avant-scène, previously only used to disencumber the stage from an excess of spectators during the performance of machine plays, began to be used at all types of production. At the same time we see there a diminishing use of the amphithéâtre.

The Guénégaud theatre was designed and built by Sourdéac and Champeron specifically for spectacular operatic productions. It possessed a large stage with extensive areas above and below to allow for the operation of machines. It was maintained by its owners, even after its closure by order of the King following the transfer of

Perrin's privilège to Lully, in such a state that performances were able to begin almost immediately following its leasing to the former members of Molière's troupe and their fusion with actors from the Marais company. The only change made to the theatre by the newly-formed Guénégaud troupe was the installation of a parterre - in its original form, the theatre had possessed an extended amphithéâtre occupying the whole of the ground-level, so that all spectators might be seated. This is indicative of the type of audience the new company hoped to attract. Perrin's operas had clearly been aimed at an élite audience, with his Académie de Musique considering itself able to dispense with the income from 'groundlings' who paid comparatively little for the right to stand throughout the performance. These had, however, provided Molière with one of the main areas of his support, and the Guénégaud company was not prepared to lose them. It is significant in this context that a considerable proportion of plays by Molière continued to be performed at the Guénégaud throughout the whole period of its activity, and that comedy was only second to spectacle in its popularity with the parterre.

Revivals of Molière's works and those of plays from the repertory of the Marais company could not, however, sustain the Guénégaud company long; and from its earliest days, contemporary commentators assumed that these would be supplemented by the production of machine plays. This assumption was based on the design of the Guénégaud theatre, the fact that the company had been obliged to take on Sourdéac and Champeron as share-holding machinistes, the previous successes enjoyed by the Marais company in the genre, and the popularity enjoyed by all spectacular productions at that time.

Spectacle had been a feature of a proportion of theatrical works since the earliest days of the seventeenth century and before. It was one of the chief attractions of ballet and other court entertainments,

as well as being one of the most important factors contributing to the successful introduction of opera into France and to the evolution of Molière's comédie-ballet. If, however, the delights of spectacle were originally largely the preserve of court theatre and a privileged élite, its influence gradually spread to affect those works given in the public theatres. Thus, Molière's ³comédie-ballets were performed in a somewhat reduced form at the Palais-Royal as well as at Court; the Académie de Musique was founded to make possible the presentation of operas for the Parisian public; but, above all, there came into being the essentially popular genre of the machine play. This had its origins in a French nationalistic response to the Italian operas introduced into France by Mazarin in the 1640s and 1650s, and the first examples can be said to have been Pierre Corneille's Andromède (written 1648, performed 1650) and Claude Boyer's Ulysse dans l'Ile de Circé (1648).¹ The Marais troupe were the specialists in this genre, producing premières by Pierre Corneille, Boyer, Gabriel Gilbert and Jean Donneau De Visé, as well as revivals of earlier works suitably adapted. These were so popular that even the Hôtel de Bourgogne company, famed for their performance of tragedy, attempted for a time to rival them in the presentation of spectacular productions.²

Certain characteristics were common to the majority of these machine plays (as, indeed, they were to most works featuring spectacle as a major attraction). They were usually on mythological subjects, thus allowing for the apparition on stage of deities in palaces, flying chariots, clouds and other such machines. They involved regular changes of décor, often with one appearing to metamorphose into another, and with perspective flats frequently being used to grandiose effect. They

¹ Delmas, Mythologie, pp. 55,77.

² Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 81-4.

provided scope for flights of characters singly or in groups. Above all they had in common a use of music. Originally only included to cover the noise of the scene changes and apparitions, music later came to be seen as one of the chief attractions of the machine play. This was particularly the case once the success of the Académie de Musique and Molière's ^Scomédie-ballets had proved how popular music was with the theatre-going public. Machine plays even came to include elaborate balletic interludes, whereas, according to Christian Delmas, one of the defining features of the genre as it had originally developed was that it contained no dancing.³ Once Lully had obtained the privilège on the production of operas, imposing limitations on the numbers of singers and musicians employed by other theatrical companies, the production of this type of work became extremely difficult. This was a factor contributing to the failure of the Marais company.

Nevertheless, the Guénégaud company could be said to have absorbed into its repertory from that of the Marais these same machine plays, just as it retained a fund of comedies by Molière.⁴ One might ask, therefore, why it did not revive certain of them in a modified form, and by so doing satisfy the public's taste for spectacle with the minimum of effort? The answer would seem to be that a theatre company's repertory was divided into two categories, which could be labelled 'bread and butter' and 'attractions'. The 'bread and butter' repertory consisted of a number of tried and tested favourites performed in rotation, with each usually being given between two and ten performances per season. At the Guénégaud, the 'bread and butter' repertory consisted for the most part of comedies by Molière. 'Attractions', on the other hand, whether

³ 'Présentation', n.p.

⁴ This was particularly the case in that all machines and décors were transferred to the Guénégaud from the Marais (Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, II, 200).

premières or important revivals, were usually performed consecutively until their popularity had been exhausted. It was extremely rare for a machine play to be performed in repertory with other works, since this would have involved the intermittent hiring of large numbers of supplementary assistants and stagehands, as well as the moving on and off-stage every two or three days of elaborate items of décor and stage machinery. They were usually only ever performed as 'attractions', and, moreover, within this category, it was rare for a machine play to be given even a full-scale revival. Thus, at the Guénégaud, the only such play to be revived was L'Inconnu, in which the spectacle is on a significantly reduced scale, involving only two décors and very little machinery.⁵ The Guénégaud company apparently decided that it would not be sufficient to merely revive old machine plays from the Marais's repertory. These could not be performed as part of the repertory, and yet did not justify a full-scale revival. What was required was a brand new blockbuster to provide the maximum impact for the new company desperately seeking to establish itself, and to justify its creation.

It is surprising, therefore, that it was not until the second season of its activity that the Guénégaud company resolved that the means by which it would best impose itself was by the production of a machine play, and that this was only after a considerable degree of dissent within the troupe had resulted in the temporary exclusion of four of its members. Still more surprising is the fact that these four were all former members of the Marais company, whom one might have supposed to have been accustomed to the production of machine plays, and

⁵ From 1680 to 1750, of Thomas Corneille's machine plays, only L'Inconnu and La Devineresse were regularly performed as part of the repertory of the Comédie-Française. Circé was revived and given eight performances in 1705 (Joannidès, Comédie-Française). This was, however, without machines, and with new divertissements composed by Dancourt (Maupoint, Bibliothèque, p. 73).

that they were apparently encouraged by the Guénégaud troupe's two machinistes, Sourdéac and Champeron, who would have seemed to have most to gain from such a production. These problems were, however, eventually settled, and the company resolved to proceed with the production of Circé at the earliest opportunity.

The person to whom the Guénégaud company turned to provide them with their first machine play was Thomas Corneille. This would seem an interesting choice, for, despite having enjoyed a long and distinguished career and having produced works which numbered amongst the greatest popular successes of the entire seventeenth century, notably Timocrate and Camma, prior to his association with the Guénégaud company Thomas had written no work containing a pronounced spectacular element. Nevertheless, themes are to be found in several of his earlier works, particularly Le Feint Astrologue and Le Berger extravagant, which anticipate his subsequent productions for the Guénégaud. In fact, in many ways it would appear inevitable that Thomas should have become an associate of the Guénégaud company. From the earliest days of his career, he had followed his brother's example in giving works to the Marais troupe, and, although he, too, deserted them for a time for the Hôtel de Bourgogne, he returned to the Marais prior to the formation of the Guénégaud company, giving them La Comtesse d'Orgueil in the winter of 1670-1.⁶ Through his brother, Thomas knew the Marquis de Sourdéac, who had designed the machines for the production by the Marais company of Pierre's La Conquête de la Toison d'or, before going on to be associated with the Académie de Musique and the Guénégaud company.⁷ He was also acquainted with Molière and certain members of his troupe. In

⁶ Gossip, 'Chronologie', p. 1046.

⁷ Thomas Corneille, Oeuvres (Paris, 1817), p. 751; Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, II, 121-35.

1658, the Corneille brothers and members of Molière's troupe had been on intimate terms, and, in addition to some ten plays by Pierre Corneille, the repertory of Molière's troupe included at that time Thomas's Dom Bertrand de Cigarral and Le Géôlier de soi-même. On the other hand, at no time did Thomas provide a work for first performance by Molière's troupe, and he seems to have held a very poor view of its capabilities, as we see from his letters to De Pure at the time of ~~the~~ Molière's transfer to Paris.⁸ There would also appear to have been a certain amount of hostility on Molière's part, and unflattering references to Thomas have been discerned in L'Ecole des femmes and its Critique.

It might seem surprising, therefore, even given Thomas's past association with the Marais, that he should have enjoyed such a special relationship with the Guénégaud company, composed as it was half of former members of Molière's troupe. That this came about was almost certainly due to the good offices of Jean Donneau De Visé, a playwright and journalist who had also been hostile to Molière in the early 1660s. De Visé, who by 1666 had become friendly enough with Molière to write the preface to Le Misanthrope, had begun his career in a somewhat similar way by first attacking and then defending Pierre Corneille (and, incidentally, his brother). He was ideally placed to bring Thomas Corneille and the Guénégaud company together. In addition to his celebrated machine plays performed by the Marais company, De Visé also gave several works to Molière's troupe, and it is a sign of the favour in which he was held, that his Les Maris infidèles was the only major work by an author other than Molière to be performed by the latter's troupe in the last two seasons of its activity. What is more, after Molière's death, De Visé was a member of the family council advising his

⁸ Gossip, 'Composition', p. 474.

widow on her daughter's affairs.⁹ He was also a close friend of Thomas Corneille, who was later to become his associate on Le Mercure galant. De Visé played a crucial rôle in the events of 1673 and continued to make a significant contribution throughout the remaining seven years. He played an active part in the negotiations which took place prior to the purchase of the Guénégaud theatre, making two visits on behalf of the remaining members of Molière's troupe, one of which was to the Marais. There can be little doubt, therefore, that he was instrumental in bringing this group of actors and those from the Marais together at the Guénégaud, and it would also appear highly likely that he brought them one of their first authors in the person of Thomas Corneille. Nor did De Visé rest there. He provided the newly-founded Guénégaud company with highly favourable publicity in Le Mercure galant, and continued for the following seven years to exploit all the possibilities provided by his gazette to advertize the Guénégaud's productions. Needless to say, he was handsomely rewarded for his services. De Visé's contribution was not, however, solely in the fields of administration and publicity. By his own report in his obituary of his friend, he also assisted Thomas in the composition of certain of the machine plays he gave to the Guénégaud, creating the divertissements for Circé, producing a prose draft of L'Inconnu for Thomas to put into verse, and writing various scenes for La Devineresse upon which Thomas imposed a structure.¹⁰ There is every likelihood that Thomas did, indeed, seek assistance from his friend who was a past master in the genre, and evidence would seem to be provided in the case of Circé by the fact that De Visé is recorded as having played the theorbo at a rehearsal for the singers and musicians. We should beware, however, of over-emphasising the importance of these

⁹ Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans, p. 661.

¹⁰ Mercure galant (January 1710), pp. 281-4.

claims made by such a determined self-publicist, and note that, curiously, De Visé only claims to have had a hand in those works which were successful.

Once brought together by De Visé, there is no doubt that a special relationship developed between the Guénégaud company and Thomas Corneille. This is demonstrated on several occasions, as when Thomas and Montfleury were each awarded a purse containing 660 livres as a bonus on their shares of the revenue of Le Comédien poète. It was even explicitly stated in 1676, when Thomas requested the payment of 700 livres outstanding to him from his shares in the production of Circé. The Guénégaud company recorded in their Registre their decision to meet his request, 'la compagnie ayant dessein de satisfaire M. de Corneille et de le conserver comme un auteur de mérite' (R IV, 10 v^o). A further sign of the special relationship which existed between Thomas Corneille and the Guénégaud company is that it was he who was selected to put Molière's Dom Juan into verse.

Of far greater importance, however, is the series of new machine plays produced by Thomas for the Guénégaud company. These works are significant not only in terms of the part played by their success in reversing the fortunes of the troupe, but also in that it is possible to see in them the last manifestations of a dying genre. As we have seen, the limitations on the use of stage music imposed at Lully's behest had made the performance of the traditional machine play virtually impossible. It was to be the task of Thomas Corneille, assisted by Donneau De Visé, to find the means of satisfying the public's taste for spectacle without infringing the terms of the royal ordonnance issued in Lully's favour. In doing so, their main innovation was to take the machine play out of the world of mythology in which it had previously been situated, and substitute other more modern contexts for spectacle.

In their first work for the Guénégaud, however, Thomas and De Visé do not appear to have been too much constrained by the restrictions imposed on stage music, and it is possible to see in Circé the last of the great mythological machine plays. Indeed, they were even so bold as to flout certain of these regulations by hiring in addition to the two singers and six musicians they were allowed, an additional singer and harpsichord player and a company of dancers. The spectacle provided by Circé was grandiose in the extreme, with frequent changements à vue, the apparition of three heavenly palaces, and numerous flights including an aerial battle between a group of 'Amours' and a group of evil spirits. Circé was not only backward-looking, however, and one innovation introduced by Thomas and De Visé was the use of sauteurs to bridge the gap between the 'figures' of the 'marcheurs' and the aerial displays of the 'voleurs'. In this context, it is interesting to note that, according to Thomas in his livre de sujet, Circé was conceived as a tribute to the King who had allowed the Guénégaud company to establish itself, and that they intended to justify his faith in them by a demonstration of all the glories of which they were capable.

In his choice of subject, however, Thomas would certainly appear to be acknowledging the place of his work in the lineage of the machine play and of other types of spectacular production. Magicians and enchantresses, and more particularly the island sorceresses, Circé, Alcine and Armide, had featured in such works from the late sixteenth century. An enchanted island where the laws of the real world do not apply provided the perfect pretext for the introduction of spectacular effects, especially as increasing efforts were being made to bring the two worlds of the stage and the audience into a closer correlation by the application of the classical unities.

Nevertheless, even if Thomas and De Visé do not appear to have been unduly restricted in their composition of Circé, we should note Pierre Bayle's comment on a performance in a letter to his brother dated 24 June 1675: 's'il était permis à la troupe de Molière de représenter avec musique et danse et les instruments selon leur fantaisie, Circé déferait hautement tous les opéras qui se sont joués jusqu'ici'.¹¹ There can be little doubt that Lully perceived his position to be threatened by the success of this production, and it is surely no coincidence that just four days after Circé opened, a new royal ordonnance was issued re-confirming Lully in his rights and stipulating that henceforth the two singers permissible in a theatrical production had to be company members rather than professionals brought in from outside. Realising that the machine play in its traditional form was doomed, the Guénégaud company soon took steps to rid itself of its two disruptive and now redundant machinistes, Sourdéac and Champeron.

The spectacle to be found in Thomas Corneille's second machine play for the Guénégaud company is on a completely different scale from that contained within Circé. L'Inconnu calls for only two décors, and although there are divertissements included within each act, only two of these require the use of any type of machinery: the appearance of a 'berceau' in Act II, scene 7, and of a secondary stage in Act V. That this reduction in the scale of the spectacle was made as a result of the restrictions imposed in Lully's favour is made abundantly clear by Thomas in his prologue to L'Inconnu. Here, Thalie the Muse of comedy, complains to the Génie de la France of the difficulty she presently finds herself in:

Je promettrais encore des divertissements
Dont on aimerait le spectacle,

¹¹ In Mèlèse, Répertoire, p. 161.

Si pour faire crier miracle
J'en pouvais à mon choix régler les ornements.

And she comments of her hero:

Que fera-t-il de magnifique,
S'il n'a pas pour l'oreille et les yeux
Ni pompe de ballets; ni charmes de musique?

Curiously, then, for their production of L'Inconnu, the Guénégaud company appear to have continued to flout the terms of the royal ordonnances, employing two professional singers, a company of dancers, and supplementary harpsichord and theorbo players.

The hero of L'Inconnu is a Marquis, who attempts to woo his reluctant mistress by a series of elaborate entertainments, while keeping her in ignorance of their author. Possibly the most significant innovation made by Thomas in L'Inconnu, therefore, is in his substitution of a romanticized contemporary reality for the mythological universe of the traditional machine play. L'Inconnu has been defined by Georges Forestier as an excellent example of the 'comédie au château'.¹² As such, it would have had the attraction of presenting for audiences in the public theatre a representation of those types of exclusive entertainments offered to members of the Court at Versailles and elsewhere. By virtue of this, L'Inconnu is also an excellent example of 'le théâtre dans le théâtre', with the Comtesse and her friends in each act assuming the rôle of onstage audience at the various entertainments provided by the unknown gentleman. It is interesting to note that these divertissements contain many of those elements associated with the traditional machine play, notably the use of stage machinery, singing and dancing, and the presence of characters from mythological and pastoral sources. Thus L'Inconnu could be said to provide not only an

¹² Théâtre dans le théâtre, p. 80.

example of theatre within theatre, but also, more specifically, of a machine play within a machine play, with remnants of the original form being contained within an adapted version. What we find in this work, therefore, is very much a delight in the theatrical. In every act we are presented with examples of the magical effects of which the theatre is capable, and one might suggest that another significant contribution to the development of the machine play made by Thomas and De Visé in this work lay in this substitution of a self-consciously theatrical magic for the mythological magic of earlier examples of the genre.

Aristocratic entertainment similarly provided the inspiration for Thomas Corneille's next machine play for the Guénégaud company, Le Triomphe des dames. This time he took advantage of the format of the 'comédie au château' to exploit the current nostalgia for days of chivalry, presenting as the climax of his work a combat à la barrière, which gave him ample scope for a display of pageantry, particularly a parade of banners displaying emblems and devices. That Thomas was once again concerned with presenting for the general public a type of entertainment that had hitherto been the preserve of a privileged élite, is admirably illustrated by the décor of Act II of Le Triomphe des dames: an elaborate grotto which must have been intended to be reminiscent of the Grotte de Thétis at Versailles, before which the Guénégaud company had performed Le Malade imaginaire in 1674. Indeed, one of the main features distinguishing Le Triomphe des dames from L'Inconnu is that in the former work décor is once again exploited as a major source of spectacle. The use of stage machinery was also on a far grander scale.

It was in Le Triomphe des dames that Thomas Corneille and the Guénégaud company first confronted the realities of the royal interdiction on music in theatrical performances. It was evidently no

longer possible for them to continue to flout this ban, and, instead, they were forced to do everything in their power to have it lifted, including making two trips to petition the King in person at Compiègne and Saint-Germain-en-Laye. They were unsuccessful, however, and Thomas was forced to ask forgiveness in his livre de sujet for any enforced historical inaccuracies in the representation of the combat: 'Je sais qu'on y faisait entrer la musique, et souhaiterais fort n'avoir pas été obligé de pécher contre cette règle'. Nonetheless, Le Triomphe des dames was not completely devoid of vocal music, and for the first time we find devices being used to excuse any lack of skill on the part of the performers: the integration of musical episodes into the plot in such a way that a less than perfect rendition appears acceptable or even desirable, and the use of music to comic effect. Nor, indeed, was Le Triomphe des dames devoid of dancing, with country dances featuring as part of wedding celebrations in Act III, and an elaborate entrée de ballet inspired by the fashionable game of cards being included in Act IV.

Both Circé and L'Inconnu enjoyed enormous success. Circé's may have been more prodigious in the short-term in that, in the words of De Visé:

...elle fut jouée sans interruption depuis le commencement du Carême jusqu'au mois de septembre, et ... pendant les six premières semaines, la salle de la comédie se trouva toute remplie dès midi; et que comme l'on n'y pouvait trouver de place on donnait un demi louis d'or à la porte, seulement pour y avoir entrée, et que l'on était content quand pour la même somme que l'on donnait aux premières loges, on était placé au troisième rang.¹³

¹³ Mercure galant (January 1710), pp. 285-6.

But the success enjoyed by L'Inconnu, which De Visé describes as 'une pièce dont on n'a jamais vu finir les représentations qu'avec regret',¹⁴ was longer-lasting, in that it was given two major revivals at the Guénégaud in 1678-9 and 1679-80, and with the reduced scale of its spectacle allowing it to be subsequently performed in repertory with other works.¹⁵ The same cannot, however, be said of Le Triomphe des dames, from which the revenue was, in Sylvie Chevalley's words, 'honorabile, mais très inférieur aux chiffres moyens des recettes pour Circé ou L'Inconnu'.¹⁶ There may be several possible explanations for this: the fact that the work was first performed in the summer rather than in the winter (the usual season for new machine plays), that its first run was interrupted due to the illness of Mlle Molière, or that for the first time the company was forced to conform to the restrictions on the use of stage music. Alternatively, it may be that the decline in popularity of the machine play at this time was due more to a change in public taste than to any other factor. Whatever the cause, no new machine play was produced at the Guénégaud theatre in the following two seasons.

Evidence of a change in public taste is provided by lines from La Fontaine's 'Epître à M. de Niert':

Des machines d'abord le surprenant spectacle
Eblouit le bourgeois et fit crier miracle;
Mais la seconde fois il ne s'y pressa plus;
Il aima mieux le Cid, Horace, Héraclius.¹⁷

¹⁴ Ibid. (April 1679), p. 363.

¹⁵ L'Inconnu was performed 132 times at the Comédie-Française between 1680 and 1750.

¹⁶ 'Triomphe', p. 383.

¹⁷ Oeuvres diverses, p. 617.

When we consider this claim in relation to the evidence on attendances at works of different genres at the Guénégaud theatre, we see that with the occupants of the parterre, comedy was generally more popular than tragedy, but that the machine play was more popular than either of these. If, as John Lough believes,¹⁸ the parterre was a bourgeois stronghold, this would seem to give the lie to La Fontaine's affirmation. In the second row of boxes, on the other hand, although again the machine play was generally more popular than the other genres, during four seasons (1675-6, 1676-7, 1679-80, 1680-1) tragedy was more popular than comedy. John Lough also quotes evidence to show that members of the bourgeoisie also were accustomed to take boxes.¹⁹ In which case, it is highly likely that these were in the second row. La Fontaine's claim would, therefore, appear to be borne out where this area of the house is concerned, with the proviso that the bourgeois seems to have preferred tragedy over comedy rather than tragedy over the machine play. The major difference between attendances in the three most expensive areas of the house (premières loges, théâtre and amphithéâtre) and those considered above is that in these areas the machine play was not invariably the most popular form of entertainment. During two seasons (1675-6, and 1676-7), average attendances at tragedies were greater than those at machine plays. Of these the most significant was possibly 1676-7, the season of the production of Le Triomphe des dames, and it may have been this comparative lack of success, when the average attendance for tragedy was almost twice that for comedy, that caused Thomas Corneille and the Guénégaud company to abandon the machine play to concentrate their energies on the production of more serious works. The audience in the most expensive areas of the house also preferred

¹⁸ Paris Theatre Audiences, p. 81.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 89.

tragedy to comedy, there being higher average attendances for such works during four seasons (1675-6, 1676-7, 1679-80, 1680-1). It is interesting to compare these figures with those for the parterre, who resolutely continued to prefer comedy over tragedy. Nevertheless, the quantity of tragedy in the Guénégaud repertory was increased, in what would seem to be an instance of a highly influential section of the audience being favoured over one which was numerically more important but possessed significantly less power.

In addition to the comparative failure of Le Triomphe des dames, events occurring during 1675-6 and 1676-7 also played a part in the Guénégaud company's decision to revise their production policy. In 1675-6, the Guénégaud company appear to have taken the decision to adopt a highly competitive attitude towards their rivals at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. Thus, in this season they embarked upon what has been described as the 'guerre des tragédies',²⁰ producing Iphigénie by Le Clerc and Coras, intended to rival the Iphigénie of Racine at the Hôtel de Bourgogne.²¹ This was followed in 1676-7 by Pradon's Phèdre et Hippolyte, which thanks to a cabal organized by the Duchesse de Bouillon enjoyed an outstanding success: nineteen performances during this season and a further six in 1677-8. In this last season the final manifestation of the 'guerre des tragédies' occurred when Boyer's Le Comte d'Essex was produced at the Guénégaud to rival Thomas Corneille's tragedy of the same title at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. The Guénégaud company must also have been encouraged to continue their production of tragedy by the success enjoyed by Abeille's Coriolan, given eighteen consecutive

²⁰ Boquet, 'Naissance', p. 121.

²¹ In fact, direct competition did not occur, since the production of Le Clerc and Coras's work was delayed on account of the successes of Dom César d'Avalos and of Circé (Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 155).

performances in 1675-6 - the first première of a tragedy to have been given at the Guénégaud since Thomas Corneille's La Mort d'Achilles in 1673-4.

Having taken the decision to replace machine plays as their chief 'attractions', the Guénégaud company was faced with the decision of what to substitute for them. They may have wished to concentrate on the production of tragedies, but it would appear that few authors of renown were working in the genre at that time. Pierre Corneille's final tragedy, Suréna, was performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in 1674-5; and Racine withdrew from the professional stage following the failure of Phèdre in 1676-7. There remained authors of the calibre of Abeille, Boyer, Pradon and Thomas Corneille. While the first three of these did provide tragedies for the Guénégaud company, its members evidently were of the opinion that this was not sufficient to supplement their 'bread and butter repertory', and so engaged upon a programme of revival. They extended the tactic they had been employing where Molière's works were concerned, and by digging deep into the repertory of Molière's troupe, and to a lesser extent that of the Marais, were able to present to the public works that in some instances had not been seen on the Parisian stage for a considerable period of time. The general principle appears to have been to replace the 'attraction' by a larger and more varied repertory of 'bread and butter' plays performed in rotation. Thus, the size of the Guénégaud repertory expanded from an average of nineteen plays in its first three seasons, to forty-nine in 1679-80 and forty-eight in 1680-1. It would also seem indicative of a desire to increase the variety of their programmes, that as the size of the repertory began to be increased, the number of double bills presented also rose.

The Guénégaud company took advantage of the possibilities presented by this policy to revive a significant proportion of tragedies

and other more serious works. The proportion rose to between a quarter and a third of the total number of plays presented each season - clearly extending the 'guerre des tragédies' into the realm of the revival and further impinging upon the supposed area of specialization of the Hôtel de Bourgogne. This challenge became more direct in 1677-8, with the Guénégaud company's revival of Pradon's Tamerlan, a work which had been given its first performance by the Hôtel de Bourgogne company only two seasons before, and in 1678-9, with the revival at the Guénégaud of Racine's Andromaque. In the past, however, the acting style of Molière's troupe in the performance of tragedies had been criticized as too 'natural'. It may well, therefore, have been to remedy this deficiency by the hiring of specialist talent, as well as to deal a further blow to their rivals, that at Easter 1679 the Guénégaud company lured away from the Hôtel de Bourgogne their leading tragic actress, Mlle Champmeslé. It is a sign of the way in which the fortunes of the Guénégaud company had improved, and the financial security it then enjoyed, that it was able to offer Mlle Champmeslé and her husband extremely advantageous terms: a full share in the company each plus an annual bonus of 1,000 livres. Following the arrival of Mlle Champmeslé, the Guénégaud company took advantage of her presence to add to the repertory many of the greatest tragic works of the century, notably those of Pierre Corneille and Racine. Thus we find Pierre Corneille's Cinna, Héraclius, Le Cid, Polyeucte and Rodogune, Thomas Corneille's Ariane and Camma, Pradon's Pirame et Thisbé, Racine's Bajazet, Bérénice, Britannicus, Mithridate and Phèdre, and Rotrou's Venceslas, in the repertories of both troupes at this time.

The Guénégaud company did not, however, solely devote itself to the production of tragedy following the transfer there of Mlle Champmeslé, and 1679-80 saw the return of Thomas Corneille and Donneau

De Visé to the genre of the machine play. According to De Visé in Le Mercure galant of January 1710 (p. 281), this was apparently at the specific request of the members of the Guénégaud troupe, who wished to capitalize on the public interest surrounding the arrest and trial of the most celebrated of devineresses, Catherine Deshayes, known as la Voisin. There is, in fact, some doubt as to whether La Devineresse can actually be considered a machine play, since the spectacle is on a scale far removed from that contained in the other works we have considered. La Devineresse calls for only one décor, representing Mme Jobin's business premises, and includes only one song, when again care is taken to justify a less than perfect rendition by the actress in question. The spectacle to be found in this work is contained in the series of special effects by which Mme Jobin attempts to deceive or frighten those people who come to consult her. Many of these are highly reminiscent of conjuring tricks: the speaking disembodied head, the body which comes down the chimney in pieces and then reconstitutes itself, or the passing of a swelling from the body of one character to another. There is also a considerable use of lighting and sound effects to heighten the tension both for the audience present on stage and in the Guénégaud auditorium.

If the ostensible aim of the authors of La Devineresse was, as they claimed, that of disabusing the public as to the folly of consulting fortune tellers, they were certainly equally if not more motivated by the thought of the money to be made from so notorious a subject. Nevertheless, it is interesting that here for the first time we find an attempt to imbue the machine play with a social utility. Evidently, a delight in the spectacular for its own sake was no longer considered sufficient. With La Devineresse, therefore, the machine play would appear to have come full circle. In Circé, it was the presence of the enchantress that provided the justification for the presentation of

elaborate special effects on stage, here it is the false magic of Mme Jobin. Even more than in L'Inconnu or Le Triomphe des dames, the machine play can be said to have quitted the realms of mythology or fantasy to take its place in the harsh and cynical world of reality.

Not surprisingly, La Devineresse was an outstanding success, and this no doubt inspired Thomas to continue along similar lines for his next and final machine play, La Pierre philosophale, produced in 1681, following the foundation of the Comédie-Française. Here, too, the aim was supposedly didactic, with Thomas claiming to have written his work to alert the public to the dangers of the pursuit of the philosopher's stone and the beliefs of the Rosicrucians. However, it would seem more likely that, inspired by Montfaucon de Villar's Le Comte de Gabalis, he was content to exploit a subject which provided him with admirable scope for spectacle, while continuing to appeal to a public delighting in tales of the supernatural. Here, as in La Devineresse, therefore, Thomas could be said to be operating a dual standard, in that both works relied for their appeal on precisely that fascination with the occult which Thomas was ostensibly decrying. Thus, if spectacle had been introduced into the machine play by means of magic in Circé, theatrical magic in L'Inconnu and, to a lesser extent, Le Triomphe des dames, and false magic in La Devineresse; here false science could be said to be performing a similar function. La Pierre philosophale differs, however, from La Devineresse in that once more spectacular effects involving elaborate décors and stage machinery are of prime importance. This has led Henry Carrington Lancaster to declare that the fifth act décor of La Pierre philosophale, representing a ruined castle, is worthy of an early nineteenth-century melodrama.²² Nevertheless, as a result of the continuing restriction on stage music, the musical content of La Pierre

²² History, IV, 921.

philosophale, if greater than that of la Devineresse, was still severely limited when compared with that of the traditional machine play.

It would seem clear, therefore, that in La Pierre philosophale, Thomas was attempting a fusion of two of his greatest successes at the Guénégaud: Circé and La Devineresse. Nonetheless, La Pierre philosophale was not a success, being withdrawn after only two performances. No doubt as a result, Thomas did not attempt the genre again, and no new machine plays were performed on the professional Parisian stage for the remainder of the century. Thus ended a genre, which, following its early days of glory at the Marais theatre, in decline, stripped of the music which was an essential adjunct to its spectacle as well as providing one of its chief attractions, was still, in the hands of Thomas Corneille and Donneau De Visé, so successful as to turn around the fortunes of the Guénégaud company, taking it from the brink of disaster to a position so powerful that it was able to challenge the mighty Hôtel de Bourgogne.

At the time of the production of La Devineresse, however, the Hôtel de Bourgogne was not so mighty as it had been in previous years. Signs of this decline are apparent as early as 1675-6, when, according to Deierkauf-Holsboer, 'ce n'est ... pas la troupe royale qui réussit le mieux à attirer le public parisien par la représentation de nouvelles pièces à grand succès'.²³ In fact, she is of the opinion that no new work was presented by the Hôtel de Bourgogne company in these years. Of the authors who had supported the troupe in the past: Brécourt had left Paris, Poisson had ceased to write for the theatre, as had Pierre Corneille following the production of Suréna in 1674, and Thomas Corneille and Montfleury had seemingly quitted the Hôtel de Bourgogne for the Guénégaud. A further serious blow to the Hôtel de Bourgogne was the retirement of Racine in 1677. Moreover, in November 1675, following

²³ Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 157.

allegations of corruption and misuse of their assets, an enquiry was begun into the affairs of the Confrérie, who, although long since forced to relinquish their control of theatrical production in Paris, were still the proprietors of the Hôtel de Bourgogne theatre. As a result, in December 1676, the assets of the Confrérie were transferred to the Hôpital Général; and in January 1677, the Confrérie was formally dissolved.²⁴

Among the tragic authors other than Pierre Corneille and Racine who supported the Hôtel de Bourgogne throughout this difficult period were: Abeille (Argélie, reine de Thessalie, 1673-4 and Lyncée, 1677-8), Boyer (Démarate, 1673-4), Thomas Corneille (Le Comte d'Essex, 1677-8), Mme Deshoulières (Genséric, roi des Vandales, 1679-80), Ferrier (Anne de Bretagne, 1678-9 and Adraste, 1679-80) Pradon (Pirame et Thisbé, 1673-4; Tamerlan ou la Mort de Bajazet, 1674-5; La Troade, 1678-9; and Statira, 1679-80) and Venel (Jephté, 1675-6). Two anonymous tragedies were also given: Antigone (1673-4) and Le Bélissaire (1678-9). Despite their supposed specialism in tragedy, the Hôtel de Bourgogne company also gave a significant number of comic premières. Of particular interest are the 'crispineries' in which Raymond Poisson starred in his celebrated comic rôle: Champmeslé's Crispin chevalier (1673-4), Hauteroche's Crispin musicien (1674-5), Montfleury's Crispin gentilhomme (1676-7) and La Tuillerie's Crispin précepteur (1679-80). Other comedies first performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in this period include: Brécourt's Le Régál des cousins de la cousine (1673-4); Hauteroche's Les Nobles de province (1677-8), Les Nouvellistes (1677-8) and La Bassette (1680-1); and Montfleury's La Dupe de soi-même (1679-80). A further two comic premières known to have been given by the Hôtel de Bourgogne company are significant in that they may be seen to indicate that, like the

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 157-9.

Guénégaud troupe, they too maintained a highly competitive attitude towards their rivals. Both these plays are derived from the works of Molière: Brécourt's L'Ombre de Molière (1673-4), ostensibly written in homage to the master, features the author's ghost as well as several of his more popular characters; Champmeslé's Les Fragments de Molière (1677-8) consists of a re-setting of several scenes from Dom Juan, and may have been intended to rival with Thomas Corneille's verse adaptation of that work first performed at the Guénégaud the previous season. We have also noted that the Hôtel de Bourgogne repertory included revivals of L'Avare, L'Ecole des femmes, Le Misanthrope, Les Fâcheux, Le Cocu imaginaire, Tartuffe and La Princesse d'Elide.²⁵

In fact, it would appear that in the latter years of the period in question, the Hôtel de Bourgogne company, too, came to the conclusion that the only way to continue to attract audiences was through a policy of revival. Thus, in addition to those works by Molière listed above, we find in their repertory: Boursault's Les Nicandres; Pierre Corneille's Le Cid, Cinna, Dom Sanche d'Aragon, Héraclius, Horace, Le Menteur, Nicomède, Oedipe, Othon, Polyeucte, La Mort de Pompée, Rodogune and Sertorius; Thomas Corneille's Antiochus, Ariane, Camma, Dom Bertrand de Cigarral, Le Géôlier de soi-même, Stilicon and Théodat; Du Ryer's Scevole; Hauteroche's Crispin médecin, Le Souper mal-apprêté, and Le Deuil, possibly written in collaboration with Thomas Corneille; Montfleury's Le Bon Soldat, La Femme juge et partie, La Fille capitaine and L'Ecole des jaloux, ou le Cocu volontaire; Poisson's L'Après-souper

²⁵ A further four works are recorded by Mouhy as having been first performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne in this period: Lefèvre's Eugénie ou le triomphe de la chasteté (August 1678), Néel's L'Illusion grotesque ou le feint nécromancien (November 1674), Silvius's La Belle Maguelonne (November 1673) and the anonymous La Pastourelle nouvelle (May 1674) (Journal, 1318 r^o, 1328 r^o, 1329 r^o, 1383 r^o). The first three of the above are also recorded by Maupoint (Bibliothèque, pp. 169, 192, 328), who gives the date of the première of L'Illusion grotesque as 1678.

des auberges, Le Baron de la Crasse and Les Pipeurs, ou les Femmes coquettes; Quinault's La Mère coquette; Racine's Alexandre le grand, ou Porus, Andromaque, Bajazet, Bérénice, Britannicus, Mithridate, Les Plaideurs, and La Thébaïde; Rotrou's Venceslas; Scarron's Dom Japhet d'Arménie, and Jodelet, ou le Maître valet; and Tristan l'Hermite's Mariane. It is interesting to note how similar this list is in many respects to that of the revivals given at the Guénégaud theatre.

According to the evidence of Le Mercure galant, revivals in general and of the works of Pierre Corneille in particular were also popular at Court. In January 1677, it is noted à propos of the production of Isis that 'les beautés de cet opéra n'ont point fait perdre au Roi et à toute la Cour le souvenir des inimitables tragédies de M. de Corneille l'aîné, qui furent représentées à Versailles pendant l'automne dernier' (p. 46). There follow lines by Pierre Corneille dedicated 'Au Roi sur Cinna, Pompée, Horace, Sertorius, Oedipe, Rodogune, qu'il a fait représenter de suite devant lui à Versailles en octobre 1676'. In March 1678, it was recorded that 'on a continué à remettre les vieilles pièces de l'incomparable M. de Corneille l'aîné, et son Polyeucte à été représenté tous ces derniers jours avec une foule et des acclamations extraordinaires' (p. 198). And, in October 1677, a list of twenty-four revivals is given as having been performed by the Hôtel de Bourgogne company as part of a royal divertissement at Fontainebleau.²⁶

Nevertheless, it would seem that this policy of revival was not so successful at the Hôtel de Bourgogne as it was at the Guénégaud, and

²⁶ These were Iphigénie and Crispin médecin, Le Menteur, Mariane and L'Après-souper des auberges, L'Avare, La Mort de Pompée and Les Nicandres, Mithridate, Le Misanthrope, Horace and Le Deuil, Bajazet and Les Fragments de Molière, Phèdre, Oedipe and Les Plaideurs, Jodelet maître, Venceslas and Le Baron de la Crasse, Cinna and L'Ombre de Molière, L'Ecole des femmes, Nicomède and Le Souper mal-apprêté.

there is little doubt that the company was extremely hard hit by the departure of the Champmeslé couple. The situation deteriorated still further with the death of La Thorillière on 27 July 1680, and the resultant 'marasme' is illustrated by Sylvie Chevalley, who records that an actor's share in the Guénégaud company for the period 28 July to 18 August 1680 was worth 305 livres 4 sols, whereas an equivalent share in the Hôtel de Bourgogne was worth only 114 livres 10 sols.²⁷

Chevalley bases her information relating to the Hôtel de Bourgogne company's finances on a mémoire drawn up by them during a legal dispute with La Thorillière's widow over money she claimed to be owed from her husband's share of the takings. We have seen La Grange's comment on La Thorillière's death in his Registre: 'Le samedi 27 de juillet 1680, M. de La Thorillière est mort à l'Hôtel de Bourgogne ce qui a donné lieu à la jonction des deux troupes' (p. 237). This has been interpreted as suggesting that prior to this event, negotiations had taken place concerning the further centralization of the dramatic arts in France by means of the merger of the Hôtel de Bourgogne and Guénégaud companies, thereby reducing the troupes operating in Paris to the Académie Royale de Musique, the combined troupe of French actors known as the Comédie-Française, and the Comédie-Italienne; and that this scheme was opposed by La Thorillière, so that it was only after his death that it could be put into operation. It has further been suggested that this opposition was the product of the same antagonism between La Thorillière and La Grange that had caused the former's desertion of Molière's troupe in 1673.²⁸

The order for the formation of the Comédie-Française was issued by the King at Charleville 18 August 1680. The following chart lists the

²⁷ Chevalley, 'Derniers Jours', p. 406.

²⁸ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais, II, 170.

members of the new company arranged according to the theatre from which they came, and shows the size of their new and old shares:

ACTORS	OLD SHARE	NEW SHARE
<u>From the Hôtel de Bourgogne:</u>		
Poisson	full share	full share
Hauteroche	full share	full share
Baron	full share	full share
La Tuillerie	full share	full share
Raisin	full share	half share
De Villiers	full share	half share
Beauval	half share	quarter ²⁹
Mlle Beauval	full share	full share
Mlle Dennebaut	full share	full share
Mlle Bellonde	full share	full share
Mlle Raisin	half share	half share
Mlle Baron	half share	quarter
<u>From the Guénégaud:</u>		
Champmeslé	full share	full share
Dauvilliers	full share	full share
La Grange	full share	full share
Hubert	full share	full share
Rosimond	full share	full share
Guérin	full share	full share
Du Croisy	full share	half share
Verneuil	full share	half share
Mlle Champmeslé	full share	full share
Mlle Guérin (Molière)	full share	full share
Mlle De Brie	full share	full share
Mlle Dupin	full share	full share
Mlle Guyot	full share	half share
Mlle Angélique (Du Croisy)	half share	half share
Mlle La Grange	half share	quarter

(R VIII, 84 v°)

Dupin and Mlle Dauvilliers were ordered to retire from the Guénégaud company, the former receiving a pension of 500 livres and the latter one of 1,000 livres. Mlle La Tuillerie was retired from the Hôtel de Bourgogne company, receiving a pension of 1,000 livres.³⁰ Other actors

²⁹ In 'Les Derniers Jours de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne' Sylvie Chevalley gives Beauval as receiving a half share in the Comédie-Française company (p. 407). In both La Grange's Registre (p. 240) and that of the Guénégaud company (VIII, 84 v°), it is recorded that he received a quarter share.

³⁰ Deierkauf-Holsboer is mistaken when she writes that all members of the Hôtel de Bourgogne company subsequently transferred to the Comédie-Française (Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 171).

who had retired previously but still received pensions from the Comédie-Française were: De Villiers (1,000 livres), Mlle Montfleury (1,000 livres), Mlle Floridor (1,000 livres), Mlle Beauchâteau (1,000 livres), Mlle Brécourt (1,000 livres), Mlle Auzillon (1,000 livres), and Sourdéac and Champeron (500 livres each). The following members of the company were obliged to pay these pensions out of their share at a rate of 1,000 livres each: Mlle De Brie, Mlle Dennebaut, Mlle Dupin, Rosimond, Hubert, Hauteroche and Guérin.³¹ The company as a whole was further obliged to pay 800 livres per annum to the Italian actors, who had been ordered to transfer to the Hôtel de Bourgogne so that the French troupe might perform on both the jours ordinaires and extraordinaires, to compensate them for any loss of revenue which might arise as a result of their change of location. The Comédie-Française was, however, rewarded with an annual royal pension of 12,000 livres.

From the above we see that twelve actors entered the Comédie-Française from the Hôtel de Bourgogne and fifteen from the Guénégaud; that former Hôtel de Bourgogne actors held nine shares in the company and former Guénégaud actors twelve and a quarter. Thus the Guénégaud actors enjoyed a degree of supremacy in terms of their voting power. The first home of the Comédie-Française was the Guénégaud theatre; and we should note the entry made in the Guénégaud Registre at the time of the first performance of the combined troupes on 25 August 1680: 'Aujourd'hui la jonction des deux troupes s'est faite et Messieurs de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne ont représenté avec nous' (R VIII, 78). The works performed on this occasion were, however, Phèdre and Les Carrosses d'Orléans, the same programme as for the previous day when the Guénégaud company were performing alone. The first play from the Hôtel de

³¹ At the Hôtel de Bourgogne, Raisin, De Villiers and Mlle Bellonde had each been obliged to pay 1,000 livres in this way (Chevalley, 'Derniers Jours', p. 407).

Bourgogne repertory to enter that of the Comédie-Française was Hauteroche's Crispin musicien on 29 August 1680. Moreover, no new account book was begun to mark the founding of the new company, so that the last of the Guénégaud Registres is, in fact, also the first of those of the Comédie-Française. Thus, it would seem that rather than an equal union of the Guénégaud and Hôtel de Bourgogne companies, the Comédie-Française was more a continuation of the former troupe with the addition of actors from the Hôtel de Bourgogne. This is disputed by Deierkauf-Holsboer,³² but would seem to be confirmed by the document analyzed by Sylvie Chevalley in 'Les Derniers Jours de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne', in which it is stated that the Comédie-Française company could not be called upon to pay to Mme La Thorillière sums owed to her deceased husband by the Hôtel de Bourgogne troupe, since that troupe had been dissolved prior to the formation of the Comédie-Française: 'la troupe de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne ayant été rompue et éteinte par l'ordre du Roi du 18 août 1680, en exécution duquel les représentations de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne ayant cessé ... ce n'est plus la même troupe de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne qui a été incorporée avec celle de Guénégaud' (p. 406). This is highly reminiscent of the events of 1673, when the Marais theatre was closed down and the company performing there dissolved, prior to the transfer of certain actors to the Guénégaud. It can be compared with the fact that a pension was paid by the Guénégaud company to Louis Béjart, a former member of Molière's troupe, despite the fact that he had never performed with them, because, in Hubert's words: 'ladite pension avait été eue pendant le vivant dudit sieur de Molière, et que ladite troupe a toujours subsisté'.³³

³² Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 171-2.

³³ Monval, 'Affaire Auzillon', p. 84.

The union of the two troupes is presented in a more equal light, however, in a lettre de cachet signed by Louis XIV and Colbert dated 25 October 1680:

Sa Majesté ayant estimé à propos de réunir les deux troupes de comédiens établis à l'Hôtel de Bourgogne et dans la rue Guénégaud à Paris, pour n'en faire à l'avenir qu'une seule afin de rendre les représentations plus parfaites par le moyen des acteurs et actrices auxquels elle a donné place dans ladite troupe, Sa Majesté a ordonné et ordonne qu'à l'avenir les dites deux troupes de comédiens seront réunies pour ne faire qu'une seule et même troupe.³⁴

Traditionally, the Comédie-Française is known as the 'Maison de Molière', even though, as we have seen, it was only founded some seven years after his death. The use of this term can, however, be seen to be at least partially justified when we consider that, although all three of the major seventeenth-century Parisian theatre companies were represented by actors in the first Comédie-Française troupe, the only one of these companies not to have been dissolved in order to be united with another was that of Molière. From a seemingly impossible position in 1673, the remaining members of Molière's troupe, joined at the Guénégaud by actors from the Marais, succeeded by dint of an astute exploitation of their own resources, and an enterprising production policy combined with a highly competitive attitude vis-à-vis their rivals, in ensuring their own survival and thus that of their inheritance from Molière. This inheritance consisted chiefly of Molière's own works,³⁵ together with those of other authors performed by his company, but also included the organizational structures and customs

³⁴ Deierkauf-Holsboer, Hôtel de Bourgogne, II, 172.

³⁵ A further reason for the Comédie-Française being known as the 'Maison de Molière' may be the high proportion of his works that its repertory has consistently contained. This is, in itself, thanks to the success of the Guénégaud company in maintaining them in its repertory.

according to which his company had been administrated. Revivals of Molière and other authors would not alone have been sufficient, however, to attract audiences in the numbers required to keep the Guénégaud theatre alive. The Guénégaud company, therefore, turned to Thomas Corneille to provide it with popular, spectacular entertainments. These had the desired effect of attracting crowds to the theatre, so that, once slightly more secure financially, the troupe was able to turn from a genre whose production was difficult and whose popularity appeared to be waning, to challenge its rivals in the very heart of their fame: the production of tragedy. Thus, if there is any justification in the tradition by which the Comédie-Française is known as the 'Maison de Molière', it is by virtue of the survival and ultimate triumph of the Guénégaud company, providing as it does the vital link between the Comédie-Française and Molière's own troupe; which same survival and success was only achieved thanks to the machine plays of Thomas Corneille.

APPENDIX ONE - THE GUENEGAUD TROUPE, ITS EMPLOYEES AND ASSOCIATES

This appendix is not intended to provide an index to all those people mentioned by name in the Guénégaud Registres - several do not fall within the categories included here (lawyers who acted for the company, whose names are generally given by La Grange, have, for example, been omitted), and even for those that do, it has only been possible to mention briefly the most important of the productions with which they are known to have been involved. Nor does space permit the inclusion of full biographical details - where possible, sources for these are indicated in notes. It is hoped, however, that this appendix will serve to give some indication as to the identity of those individuals involved with the Guénégaud company on a regular basis - taking part in productions, providing materials and services. Further difficulties arise in that names appear in the Registres with many and varied forms of spelling, and that people are referred to by different nicknames - 'le gros Crosnier', 'le vieux Crosnier' etc. Every attempt has been made to resolve these, but where the slightest doubt remained, caution dictated the inclusion of separate entries.

A. THE TROUPE

Aubry, Mlle (Geneviève Béjart) - 1673-5.¹

Auzillon, Mlle (Marie Dumont) - 1673-9.

Béjart, Louis (pensionnaire) - 1673-8.

Champeron, François Bersac de Fondant, Sieur de (machiniste) - 1673-8.

Champmeslé (Charles Chevillet, known as) - 1679-80.

¹ For biographical details of all those actors and actresses who were members of the Guénégaud company, see the relevant entries in Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique.

Champmeslé, Mlle (Marie Desmares) - 1679-80.²

Dauvilliers (Nicolas Dorné, known as) - 1673-80.

Dauvilliers, Mlle (Victoire-Françoise Poisson) - 1673-80.³

De Brie (Edme Villequin, known as) - 1673-6.

De Brie, Mlle (Catherine Leclerc du Rosé) - 1673-80.⁴

Du Croisy (Philbert Gassot, known as) - 1673-80.

Du Croisy, Angélique - 1673-80.⁵

Dupin (Joseph du Landas, sieur du Bignon, known as) - 1673-80.

Dupin, Mlle (Louise Jacob) - 1673-80.⁶

Guérin d'Estriché, Isaac-François - 1673-80.

² Included in the 1688 edition of La Fameuse comédienne were a number of epigrams describing actresses belonging to the Guénégaud troupe, which are reproduced below as notes to the relevant entries. They originally appeared in 1680; their authorship is unknown. Mlle Champmeslé is described as follows:

A plus tendre amour elle fut destinée,
Qui prit assez longtemps Racine dans son coeur;
Mais, par un insigne malheur,
Un Tonnerre est venu qui l'a déracinée. (p. 62)

in reference to the replacement of Racine in Mlle Champmeslé's affections by the Comte de Tonnerre.

³ On lui croit de la chasteté,
Non que son humeur soit tigresse,
Mais quand on manque de beauté
C'est là caution de sagesse. (p. 62)

⁴ Il faut qu'elle ait été charmante,
Puisqu'aujourd'hui, malgré ses ans,
A peine des charmes naissants
Egalent sa beauté mourante. (p. 61)

⁵ Elle a la taille fort mignonne,
Beaucoup d'esprit et bien de l'agrément,
La bouche belle et beaucoup d'enjouement;
Mais son papa de trop près la tatonne. (p. 62)

⁶ Elle aime les plaisirs et veut qu'ils soient secrets;
Du moindre petit bruit son fier honneur s'offense:
Elle a beau désirer des amants bien discrets,
Elle en a trop pour sauver l'apparence. (p. 62)

Guyot, Mlle (Judith de Nevers) - 1673-80.⁷

Hubert, André - 1673-80.

La Grange (Charles Varlet, known as) - 1673-80.

La Grange, Mlle (Marie Ragueneau) - 1673-80.⁸

La Roque (Pierre Regnault Petitjean, known as) - 1673-6.

Molière, Mlle (Armande-Grésinde-Claire-Elisabeth Béjart) - 1673-80.⁹

Rosimond (Claude de la Rose, known as) - 1673-80.

Sourdéac, Alexandre de Rieux, Marquis de (machiniste) -1673-8.¹⁰

Verneuil (Achille Varlet, known as) - 1673-80.

B. SINGERS AND MUSICIANS

Babet, Mlle (singer) - Le Malade imaginaire.

Bastonnet, Mlle (singer) - Le Malade imaginaire, Circé, L'Inconnu.

Bourdelou (violon) - Le Malade imaginaire.

Carles, André (theorbo) - Le Malade imaginaire, L'Inconnu.

Charpentier, <Marc-Antoine> (composer) - Le Malade imaginaire, Circé,
L'Inconnu, Le Triomphe des dames, La Pierre
philosophale.¹¹

7 De La Guyot je ne vous dirai rien;
De tout ce que j'en sais l'on doit faire mystère;
Quand on ne peut dire du bien,
On a beaucoup mieux de se taire. (p. 62)

8 Si, n'ayant qu'un amant, on peut passer pour sage,
Elle est assez femme de bien;
Mais elle en aurait davantage,
Si l'on voulait aimer pour rien. (p. 61)

9 Les grâces et les ris règnent sur son visage;
Elle a l'air tout charmant, et l'esprit tout de feu;
Elle avait un mari d'esprit, qu'elle aimait peu:
Elle prend un de chair, qu'elle aime davantage.
(p. 61)

¹⁰ See V. and M. Delavigne, 'Un grand seigneur au XVII^e siècle: le Marquis de Sourdéac', Revue hebdomadaire (25 November 1911), pp. 450-84; Armand Jardillier, La Vie originale de Monsieur de Sourdéac (Le Neubourg, 1961).

¹¹ See Hitchcock, 'Charpentier' and Oeuvres.

Chauffin (violon) - Circé.

Converset, <Jean> (violon) - Le Malade imaginaire, Tartuffe (visit), Circé, Inconnu, Le Dépit amoureux, L'Amour médecin, Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Le Festin de pierre, Amphitryon.¹²

Courcelles (violon) - Le Malade imaginaire, Circé, L'Inconnu.

Delaporte (clavecin) - Le Malade imaginaire, Inconnu, and repair to clavecin (March 1675).

Dufresne (violon) - Le Malade imaginaire, Circé, L'Inconnu.

Dumont (violon) - Le Malade imaginaire, Circé, L'Inconnu, Le Misanthrope (symphonie).

Duvivier, <Jacques> (violon) - Le Malade imaginaire, Circé, L'Inconnu (and rehearsals), Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.¹³

Gaye (singer) - Circé.

Marchand, <Pierre> (violon) - Le Malade imaginaire, Circé, L'Inconnu, L'Amour médecin.¹⁴

Poussin, <Louis Joseph> (singer) - Circé, L'Inconnu, Les Coups de l'amour et de la fortune?.¹⁵

C. 'ASSISTANTS' AND EMPLOYEES

Alard (sauteur) - Le Comédien poète, Le Malade imaginaire.

Aubry <Jean-Baptiste> - receiving pension of Louis Béjart, rehearsals for L'Inconnu held in his home.¹⁶

Baquet (assistant) - Le Triomphe des dames.

Baraillon, 'le petit' - Monsieur de Pourceaugnac (assistant).¹⁷

Barbier, Claude ('ouvre l'amphithéâtre et fournit le théâtre de tapisserie et de chaises') - numerous references

¹² See Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ See La Grange, Registre; Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans; Chevalley, 'Etude critique'.

¹⁶ See Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans; Chevalley, 'Etude critique'.

¹⁷ See Thierry, Documents.

including: Panurge (ouvrier), Circé (rehearsals, publicity, 'moyen voleur'), L'Inconnu (goods), Le Festin de pierre.¹⁸

Barbier, Mme <Anne Notin>.¹⁹

Barbier, 'le petit' - Circé.²⁰

Batiste, François - Circé (menuisier).

Baudoin.

Bedouin - Circé ('petit voleur').

Bedouin, Mme.

Berbault, Antoine - Circé ('petit voleur').

Boquet, Claude - Circé ('charpentier pour le haut').

Bourgeois, Denis - Circé ('charpentier pour le haut').

Bourgeois, Toussaint - Circé ('charpentier pour le haut').

Briart, Claude - Circé ('charpentier pour le haut').

Busselin - Le Triomphe des dames (assistant).

Buterne - Le Malade imaginaire (assistant).

Caron (menuisier).²¹

Castel - Le Triomphe des dames (assistant).

Cavois, Antoine - Circé (crocheteur).

Cerceau - Circé (menuisier).

Charpentier, Antoine - Circé.

Châteauneuf, <Henri Réveillon de> (assistant) - L'Ambigu comique, Pulchérie, Amphitryon, Le Comédien poète (voleur), Trigaudin, Le Malade imaginaire.²²

¹⁸ See La Grange, Registre; Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans; Thierry, Documents.

¹⁹ See Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans.

²⁰ See Chevalley, 'Etude critique'.

²¹ See Thierry, Documents.

²² See La Grange, Registre; La Thorillière, Premier Registre; Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans; Chevalley, 'Etude critique'.

Châteauneuf, Mlle <Madeleine de la Genière>. ²³

Chaumont <Philippe?> - Le Malade imaginaire (assistant). ²⁴

Chauvet, Michel - Circé (manoeuvre). ²⁵

Cheron, Gillot - Circé ('moyen voleur').

Contois - Le Malade imaginaire (assistant).

Coupet - Le Malade imaginaire (assistant), Circé (marcheur), Le Bourgeois gentilhomme (assistant).

Crochu, Breton - Circé (manoeuvre).

Croisac <Nicolas Bonenfant, known as>. ²⁶

Crosnier (décorateur) - numerous references. ²⁷

Crosnier, 'l'aîné' (manoeuvre and assistant) - numerous references including: Panurge, Tartuffe, Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, Les Femmes savantes.

Crosnier, 'le gros'.

Crosnier père, <Gilles> (manoeuvre and assistant) - numerous references including: Circé, L'Inconnu, Coriolan, Tartuffe, Les Femmes savantes, Le Triomphe des dames. ²⁸

Crosnier, 'le vieux'.

Crosnier cadet <Jacques, known as Du Perche?> - Panurge (ouvrier). ²⁹

Crosnier, Mme - Circé (wood).

Crosnier, 'la femme de l'aîné'.

²³ See La Fameuse comédienne.

²⁴ See Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans; Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique.

²⁵ See Thierry, Documents.

²⁶ See La Grange, Registre; Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans; Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique.

²⁷ See La Thorillière, Premier Registre; Schwartz, 'Light on Molière'; La Grange, Registre; Chevalley, 'Etude critique'; Thierry, Documents; Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique; Zdanowicz, 'Jean Crosnier'.

²⁸ See Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans.

²⁹ See Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans; Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique.

Crosnier, 'la veuve'.³⁰

Dalaiseau (painter) - Circé, L'Inconnu, Le Triomphe des dames.

Daniel - Circé ('petit voleur').

Dauphiné - Circé (menuisier).

De Flandre (menuisier) - Circé, L'Inconnu, Le Triomphe des dames,
L'Avocat sans étude.

Des Barres (ouvrier and tailleur) - many references including: Panurge,
Circé.³¹

Des Barres, Mme (wardrobe mistress and/or cloakroom attendant) - many
references including: Circé, Inconnu, Le Triomphe des
dames (and sewing of décors).

Des Carres.

Des Oz - Circé (marcheur).

Desbrosses, <Antoine> (choreographer) - Le Triomphe des dames.³²

De Vienne.

Dubreuil (décorateur) - numerous references including: Panurge
(ouvrier), Circé ('grand voleur').

Duchemin <Charles> ('porte du parterre').³³

Du Croisy, Mlle <Marie Claveau>. ³⁴

Du Croisy, 'le petit' <François?> - Circé.³⁵

Dufors (concierge) - numerous references.

Dufors - Le Malade imaginaire (assistant), Circé (marcheur).

Dufors/Du Feu (ouvrier) - Circé.

Dufors, Mme - Circé (provided sheets for animals).

Dumesnil (menuisier) - Circé ('charpentier pour le haut').

³⁰ See Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans.

³¹ See Chevalley, 'Etude critique'.

³² See Schwartz, 'Light on Molière'; Deierkauf-Holsboer, Marais.

³³ See Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans.

³⁴ See La Grange, Registre; Chevalley, 'Etude critique'; Mongrédien and
Robert, Dictionnaire biographique.

³⁵ See Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique.

Dupin, 'la petite' <Elisabeth?> - L'Inconnu (La Jeunesse), Le Triomphe des dames (Fanchon).³⁶

Ena.

L'Espagnol.

Ferrier (menuisier) - Circé, L'Inconnu, Le Triomphe des dames, Le Festin de pierre.

Flautin.

Fontin.

Fonton - Le Malade imaginaire (assistant), Circé (marcheur), Le Comédien poète, Le Festin de pierre (assistant).

Fort - Panurge (ouvrier), Le Bourgeois gentilhomme (assistant).

François - Panurge (ouvrier), Le Bourgeois gentilhomme (assistant).³⁷

François ('porteur de violons') - Le Malade imaginaire (assistant), Panurge (ouvrier), L'Inconnu.

Froison <Claude Froissant, known as d'Orgemont?> - Le Malade imaginaire (assistant).³⁸

'Le garçon de la limonade'.

'Les garçons de M. Baraillon' - Amphitryon, Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Le Malade imaginaire, La Devineresse.

Gaultier, Claude, 'dit Champagne' - Circé ('charpentier pour le haut').

Gaultier, Edme - Circé ('charpentier pour le haut').

Greneteau - Le Malade imaginaire (assistant).

Gros-Jean - Circé.

Heritoy, Gilbert (mason) - L'Inconnu.

'L'homme de Mathurin le forgeron'.

'L'homme de M. Barbier'.³⁹

³⁶ See Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique, p. 90.

³⁷ See La Thorillière, Premier Registre; Schwartz, 'Light on Molière'; Thierry, Documents; Chevalley, 'Etude critique'.

³⁸ See Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique.

³⁹ See Thierry, Documents.

Hubert, Mlle <Catherine Morant> ('charge des billets') - many references.⁴⁰

Huirs (garçon tailleur) - L'Inconnu.

Hyret - Le Triomphe des dames (assistant).

Jardinier, Jacques - Circé (manoeuvre).

Labare.

La Coste, François - Circé (manoeuvre).

La Cour, Michel (mason) - Circé (manoeuvre).

La Croix - Circé (menuisier).

La Montagne (choreographer and assistant) - Le Malade imaginaire (assistant), Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, Circé (marcheur), L'Inconnu (choreography), Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, Le Dépit amoureux, Amphitryon.

La Montagne, 'le petit' - Le Bourgeois gentilhomme (assistant).

Languedoc, 'grand' - Circé (menuisier).

Languedoc, 'petit' - Circé (menuisier).

La Pie<rre> - Trigaudin, Panurge (ouvrier).⁴¹

La Pierre (copyist) - numerous references.⁴²

'Le laquais de M. de La Grange' - Les Charmes de Félicie, Les Fâcheux, Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, L'Inconnu.

La Riviche (ouvrier).

La Roque - Circé (menuisier).

Laurens (menuisier).

La Vallée Bleu - Circé ('petit voleur').

La Vallée Bleu - Circé ('moyen voleur').

La Villette, Mme (limonadière).

Lazard - Le Comédien poète.

⁴⁰ See Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique.

⁴¹ See Thierry, Documents.

⁴² See La Thorillière, Premier Registre; Schwartz, 'Light on Molière'.

Le Breton ('gagnedenier', 'portefaix') - numerous references including Panurge (ouvrier), Circé (manoeuvre), Le Bourgeois gentilhomme.

Le Breton fils - Circé ('petit voleur'), Le Bourgeois gentilhomme ('le petit Turc').

Le Cartier.

Lefèvre - Le Malade imaginaire (assistant), Circé (marcheur).

Lefèvre 'des Italiens' - Le Malade imaginaire (assistant), Circé (marcheur).

Lefèvre, Jean - Circé ('charpentier pour le haut').

Le Maigre.

Le Mauguice.

Le Roy fils, Pierre - Circé (manoeuvre).

Le Roy père, Pierre - Circé (manoeuvre).

Lionce - Le Malade imaginaire (assistant).

Loriau/Lariau, François - Circé (manoeuvre).⁴³

Louis.⁴⁴

Mariage.

Marot <Jean-Baptiste>.⁴⁵

Mathurin ('domestique de M. le marquis de Sourdéac') - Le Triomphe des dames (guarding décors).

Mathurin (forgeron) - Circé (crocheteur), L'Inconnu, Le Triomphe des dames.

Mathurin (serrurier) - L'Inconnu.

Maurice.

Mené, Antoine - Circé ('charpentier pour le haut').

Mené, Denis - Circé ('moyen voleur').

Mené, François - ('charpentier pour le haut').

Mené, Michel - Circé (crocheteur).

⁴³ See Chevalley, 'Etude critique'; Thierry, Documents.

⁴⁴ See Thierry, Documents.

⁴⁵ See Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans.

Michel, Mlle (limonadière).

Montelimar - Circé (menuisier).

Montenot - Le Malade imaginaire (assistant).

Nivelon - Le Malade imaginaire (assistant), Circé (marcheur),
Amphitryon.

Nourrice.

Orniccie.

Ourlies, Jacob - Circé ('_petit voleur').

Ourlies, Richard - Circé ('petit voleur').

Ozin, Jacques - Circé (manoeuvre).

Parisien - Circé (menuisier).

Picard <Nicolas?> (assistant) - Coriolan, Le Triomphe des dames.⁴⁶

Provart - Circé (menuisier).

Provost <Marin Prévost> - Circé ('grand voleur').⁴⁷

Provost frère <Jacques?> - Circé ('petit voleur').⁴⁸

Provost, Mme <Anne Brillart> ('la recette au bureau') - numerous
references.⁴⁹

Provost fils <Pierre?> - Circé ('petit voleur').⁵⁰

Provost, 'le petit' <Pierre?> - Circé.⁵¹

Ragot <François Racot, known as de Montreuil? or Daniel Racot, known as
Grandval?> - Circé (marcheur).⁵²

⁴⁶ See Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique.

⁴⁷ See La Thorillière, Premier Registre; Schwartz, 'Light on Molière';
Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique.

⁴⁸ See Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans; Mongrédien and Robert,
Dictionnaire biographique.

⁴⁹ See La Thorillière, Premier Registre; Schwartz, 'Light on Molière';
Chevalley, 'Etude critique'; La Grange, Registre; Thierry,
Documents.

⁵⁰ See Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² See Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique.

Ramneau.

Rosimond, Mlle <Jeanne Capois> - Le Festin de pierre (assistant).⁵³

Saint-Amant Gratis - Circé (marcheur), L'Inconnu.

Saint-Aubin - Circé (menuisier).

Saint-Denis - Circé (manoeuvre).

Soussaints.

Soussin - Les Charms de Félicie.⁵⁴

Subtil (portier) - many references.

Templier - Circé (manoeuvre), Le Bourgeois gentilhomme (assistant).

Testu, Jacques (barber) - Circé ('grand voleur').

Tibaut, François (violon) - Circé ('grand voleur').

Toubel <Philippe, known as Alcidor? or Raimond?> - Panurge.⁵⁵

Toubel, François - Circé ('grand voleur').⁵⁶

Toubel 'l'aîné' <Etienne?> - Circé ('grand voleur').⁵⁷

Toubel fils <François?> - Le Malade imaginaire.

Vasse, Robert - Circé (crocheteur).

Viterbe - Le Malade imaginaire (assistant).

Vllon, Antoine - Circé ('petit voleur').

D. TRADESPEOPLE AND CRAFTSMEN

Adam, Guillaume (printer).

Baraillon, <Jean> (costumier) - L'Avare, Amphitryon, La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas, Le Comédien poète, La Mort d'Achilles, L'Amour médecin, Le Dépit amoureux, Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, L'Ambigu comique, Le Malade imaginaire,

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ See Thierry, Documents.

⁵⁵ See Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans; Chevalley, 'Etude critique'; Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique.

⁵⁶ See Mongrédien and Robert, Dictionnaire biographique.

⁵⁷ See Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans.

Panurge, Circé, L'Inconnu, Le Triomphe des dames,
Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.⁵⁸

Barro (marchand) - Le Triomphe des dames.

Baudry (printer).

Boudet, <André> (tapissier) - goods and loan for purchase of theatre.⁵⁹

Bouret (marchand de fer/clou) - Circé, L'Inconnu, Le Triomphe des dames,
Le Festin de pierre.

Boutillier (doreur) - Le Triomphe des dames.

Cadet (mercier) - Le Triomphe des dames.

Cambrogé/Cambergé (marchand papetier) - Circé, Le Triomphe des dames.

Charles (vanier) - Circé, L'Inconnu.

Charpentier (marchand de fils de fer) - Circé.

Dalaiseau (painter) - Circé, L'Inconnu, Le Triomphe des dames.

De Beyne (marchand de bois) - Circé.

De Laugint (cordier).

Docquin (cabaretier) - many references including rehearsals for Circé,
Le Triomphe des dames, Le Festin de pierre.

Dubois (cordonnier) - Le Triomphe des dames.

Dubois, <Jean-Baptiste> (marchand de bois) - L'Inconnu.⁶⁰

Du Creux <Jean? Jacques?> - Le Triomphe des dames (helmet).⁶¹

Du Crosil - Le Triomphe des dames (boots).

Du Troulleau (gantier) - Circé.

Du Vausel (marchand) - Le Triomphe des dames.

Ezouard, Mme - construction and repair of chandeliers.

⁵⁸ See Schwartz, 'Light on Molière'; La Grange, Registre; Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans de recherches; Chevalley, 'Etude critique'; Thierry, Documents.

⁵⁹ See La Grange, Registre; Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans de recherches; Thierry, Documents.

⁶⁰ See Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans de recherches.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Fontel<le> , <François> (sculptor) - Le Triomphe des dames.⁶²

Gidois (épicier) - Le Triomphe des dames.

Granvost (marchand de ruban) - L'Inconnu, Le Triomphe des dames.

Henry (bonnetier and marchand de bas) - L'Inconnu, Le Triomphe des dames.

Jumel<le, Pierre?> - Le Festin de pierre ('viandes contrefaites').⁶³

La Brie (cocher) - Circé.

Lalouette, <François> (faiseur de plaques) - Le Bourgeois gentilhomme
(repairs to turbans), Panurge, Le Triomphe des dames
('boucliers').⁶⁴

Le Guain (fondeur) - construction of chandeliers.

Le Mareschal - iron, hire of worksite.

Le Moyne - hire of 'hangar'.

Loiseau (cordonnier) - L'Inconnu, Le Triomphe des dames.

Loyal (huissier).⁶⁵

Massé (cabaretier) - many references including rehearsals for Circé,
L'Inconnu, Le Triomphe des dames, Le Festin de pierre,
Phèdre et Hippolyte.

Massé, Mme.

Mécard/t (chandelier) - many references.⁶⁶

Mécard/Maincar, Mme (chandelière) - numerous references including sums
of money kept by her for the troupe.⁶⁷

Noel (marchand de ruban) - Le Triomphe des dames.

Ourlies (cabaretier) - Circé.

Ourlies, Mme.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ See Chevalley, 'Etude critique'; Thierry, Documents.

⁶⁵ See La Grange, Registre, I, 377 - refers to the fact that the name of Loyal is not to be found in La Grange's Registre; Georges Monval, 'M. Loyal', Le Moliériste, 8 (1886), pp. 44-6.

⁶⁶ See Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans.

⁶⁷ See La Grange, Registre.

Piton (serrurier) - Le Triomphe des dames.

Poisle (marchand) - crystal for chandeliers.

Prat, <Pierre> (painter) - Panurge.⁶⁸

Raison (serrurier).

Ramneau.

Saint-Martin (painter) - Circé, L'Inconnu, Le Triomphe des dames.

Seneschal (marchand) - L'Inconnu (artificial leaves).

'La servante de Mme Maincar'.

Simone, Mme (marchande de toile) - Le Festin de pierre.

Tavanner, Simon (fourbisseur) - Le Triomphe des dames.

Tennière, Mme (lingère) - Le Triomphe des dames.

Vaignard, Mme <Angélique Bourdon, veuve> (ustensiles) - Le Malade
imaginaire, Circé, L'Inconnu, Le Triomphe des dames.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ See Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans; Chevalley, 'Etude critique'.

⁶⁹ See Schwartz, 'Light on Molière'; Jurgens and Maxfield-Miller, Cent ans; Chevalley, 'Etude critique'; Thierry, Documents.

APPENDIX TWO - THE REPERTORY OF THE GUENEGAUD THEATRE 1673-1680

Abeille, Coriolan, tragedy, première.

Boisrobert, La Folle Gageure, comedy, probably first performed Hôtel de Bourgogne, 1652.

Boursault, Les Amours de Germanicus, tragedy, first performed Marais, 1673.

----- La Princesse de Clèves, tragedy, première.

Boyer, Le Comte d'Essex, tragedy, première.

Champmeslé, La Bassette, première.

----- Les Carrosses d'Orléans, première (La Chapelle).

Corneille, Pierre, Cinna, tragedy, first performed Marais, 1640/1.

----- Le Cid, tragicomedy, first performed Marais, 1637 (known as a tragedy, 1648-82).

----- Héraclius, tragedy, first performed Hôtel de Bourgogne, 1647.

----- Médée, tragedy, first performed Marais, 1635.

----- Polyeucte, tragedy, first performed Marais, 1641/2.

----- Pulchérie, comédie-héroïque, first performed Marais 1672.

----- Rodogune, tragedy, first performed Marais, 1644.

----- Tite et Bérénice, comédie-héroïque, first performed Palais-Royal, 1670.

Corneille, Thomas, Ariane, tragedy, first performed Hôtel de Bourgogne 1672.

----- Camma, tragedy, first performed Hôtel de Bourgogne, 1661.

----- Circé, tragedy, première.

----- La Comtesse d'Orgueil, comedy, first performed Marais, 1670.

----- La Devineresse, comedy, première.

----- Dom Bertrand de Cigarral, comedy, first performed Marais, 1651.

----- Dom César d'Avalos, comedy, première.

----- Le Festin de pierre, comedy, première (adaptation of Molière's Dom Juan).

----- L'Inconnu, comedy, première.

----- La Mort d'Achilles, tragedy, première.

----- Le Triomphe des dames, comedy, première.

Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin, Les Visionnaires, comedy, first performed
Marais, 1637.

^u
Dy Ryer, Scévole, tragedy, first performed Illustre Théâtre, 1644.

Le Fagotier, comedy, in repertory of Molière's troupe, 1661.

Le Fin/Feint Lourdaud, comedy, in repertory of Molière's troupe, 1668.

Le Gentilhomme meunier, comedy, première.

Guérin de Bouscal, Le Gouvernement de Sanche Pansa, comedy, first
performed Marais, 1641.

Le Clerc and Coras, Iphigénie, tragedy, première.

Molière, L'Amour médecin, comedy, first performed Versailles, 1665.

----- Amphitryon, comedy, first performed Palais-Royal, 1668.

----- L'Avare, comedy, first performed Palais-Royal, 1668.

----- Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, comédie-ballet, first performed
Chambord, 1670.

----- La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas, comedy, first performed Saint-
Germain, 1671.

----- La Critique de l'Ecole des femmes, comedy, first
performed Palais-Royal, 1663.

----- Le Dépit amoureux, comedy, first performed by Molière's
troupe, 1656.

----- L'Ecole des femmes, comedy, first performed Palais-Royal,
1662.

----- L'Ecole des maris, comedy, first performed Palais-Royal,
1661.

----- L'Etourdi, comedy, first performed by Molière's troupe,
1655.

----- Les Fâcheux, comedy, first performed Vaux-le Vicomte,
1661.

----- Les Femmes savantes, comedy, first performed Palais-
Royal, 1672.

----- Les Fourberies de Scapin, comedy, first performed Palais-
Royal, 1671.

- George Dandin, comedy, first performed Versailles, 1668.
- Le Malade imaginaire, comedy, first performed Palais-Royal, 1673.
- Le Mariage forcé, comedy, first performed Louvre, 1664.
- Le Misanthrope, comedy, first performed Palais-Royal, 1666.
- Le Médecin malgré lui, comedy, first performed Palais-Royal, 1666.
- Monsieur de Pourceaugnac, comedy, first performed Chambord, 1669.
- Les Précieuses ridicules, comedy, first performed Petit-Bourbon, 1659.
- Sganarelle ou le Cocu imaginaire, comedy, first performed Petit-Bourbon, 1660.
- Le Sicilien, comedy, first performed Saint-Germain, 1667.
- Tartuffe, comedy, first performed Versailles, 1664.
- Montauban, Les Charmes de Félicie, pastorale, probably first performed Hôtel de Bourgogne, 1653.
- Panurge, comedy, première.
- Montfleury, L'Ambigu comique ou la Didon lardée, tragedy with three comic intermèdes, first performed Marais, 1673.
- La Dame médecin, comedy, première.
- Dom Pasquin d'Avalos, comedy, first performed Marais, 1673 (intermède from L'Ambigu comique).
- Le Mariage de rien, comedy, first performed Hôtel de Bourgogne, 1660.
- Le Semblable à soi-même, comedy, first performed Marais, 1673 (intermède from L'Ambigu comique).
- Trigaudin, comedy, première.
- and Thomas Corneille, Le Comédien poète, comedy, première.
- Pader d'Assezan (Boyer), Agamemnon, tragedy, première.
- Pradon, Electre, tragedy, première.
- Tamerlan ou la mort de Bajazet, tragedy, first performed Hôtel de Bourgogne, 1675.
- Phèdre et Hippolyte, tragedy, première.

- Pirame et Thisbé, tragedy, first performed Hôtel de Bourgogne 1674.
- Quinault, Agrippa, roi d'Albe ou le faux Tiberinus, tragicomedy, first performed Hôtel de Bourgogne, 1662.
- Astrate, roi de Tyr, tragedy, first performed Hôtel de Bourgogne, 1664/5.
- Les Coups de l'amour et de la fortune, tragicomedy, first performed Hôtel de Bourgogne, 1655.
- Racine, Andromaque, tragedy, first performed Hôtel de Bourgogne, 1667.
- Bajazet, tragedy, first performed Hôtel de Bourgogne, 1672.
- Bérénice, tragedy, first performed Hôtel de Bourgogne, 1670.
- Britannicus, tragedy, first performed Hôtel de Bourgogne, 1669.
- Mithridate, tragedy, first performed Hôtel de Bourgogne, 1673.
- Phèdre, tragedy, first performed Hôtel de Bourgogne, 1677.
- Rosimond, L'Avocat sans étude, comedy, first performed Marais, 1669.
- La Dupe amoureuse, comedy, first performed Marais, 1670.
- Le Volontaire, comedy, première.
- Rotrou, Venceslas, tragedy, first performed Hôtel de Bourgogne, 1647.
- Scarron, L'Héritier ridicule, comedy, first performed Hôtel de Bourgogne, 1647.
- Subligny, Le Désespoir extravagant, comedy, first performed Palais-Royal, 1670.
- Tristan l'Hermite, La Mariane, tragedy, first performed Marais, 1636/7.
- Vaumorière, Le Cavalier par amour, comedy, première.

APPENDIX THREE - PERFORMANCES AT THE GUENEGAUD THEATRE 1673-1680

A. PERFORMANCES SEASON BY SEASON¹

	73-4	74-5	75-6	76-7	77-8	78-9	79-80	80-1	Total
<u>Tartuffe</u>	7	10	4	5	6	8	5	2	47
<u>Les Femmes savantes</u>	7	7	1	4	2	5	3	2	31
<u>L'Avare</u>	9	6	3	6	5	7	2	2	40
<u>Le Misanthrope</u>	3	1	-	10	4	9	4	2	33
<u>L'Ambigu comique</u>	5	1	2	4	1	2	-	-	15
<u>Pulchérie</u>	4	-	2	2	2	-	-	-	10
<u>Le Cocu imaginaire</u>	2	-	5	2	8	7	5	5	34
<u>L'Ecole des femmes</u>	5	5	2	3	2	3	4	1	25
<u>Amphitryon</u>	13	4	3	8	3	8	6	2	47
<u>Le Dépit amoureux</u>	4	2	-	6	4	5	1	-	22
<u>La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas</u>	5	2	-	-	2	5	6	5	25
<u>Le Médecin malgré lui</u>	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
<u>L'Ecole des maris</u>	5	8	2	4	2	6	2	2	31
<u>Germanicus</u>	9	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	11
<u>Le Semblable à soi-même</u>	2	-	3	4	8	1	5	2	25
<u>Le Comédien poète*</u>	21	3	3	4	-	4	1	-	36
<u>L'Amour médecin</u>	1	1	-	3	5	6	2	2	20
<u>La Mort d'Achilles*</u>	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
<u>George Dandin</u>	5	8	1	5	6	6	2	2	35
<u>Trigaudin*</u>	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
 <u>Le Bourgeois gentilhomme</u>		13	-	8	5	8	4	3	41
<u>Le Malade imaginaire</u>		49	-	-	13	11	6	2	81
<u>Panurge*</u>		13	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
<u>Dom César d'Avalos</u>		14	-	6	-	-	-	-	16
<u>Circé*</u>		9	67	-	-	-	-	-	76
 <u>Iphigénie*</u>			7	-	-	-	-	-	7
<u>L'Avocat sans étude</u>			5	6	6	7	4	2	30
<u>L'Inconnu*</u>			32	3	-	6	6	-	47
<u>Coriolan*</u>			18	-	-	-	-	-	18
<u>Le Volontaire*</u>			5	-	-	-	-	-	5
 <u>Monsieur de Pourceaugnac</u>				7	6	7	5	2	27
<u>Les Fâcheux</u>				4	4	6	3	2	19
<u>Dom Pasquin d'Avalos</u>				2	-	-	1	1	4
<u>Le Triomphe des dames*</u>				26	-	-	-	-	26
<u>Agrippa, roi d'Albe</u>				4	2	2	-	-	8
<u>Phèdre et Hippolyte*</u>				19	6	2	-	-	27
<u>Le Festin de pierre*</u>				6	11	5	5	2	29

¹ Asterisks denote works given for the first time.

	77-8	78-9	79-80	80-1	Total
<u>La Comtesse d'Orgueil</u>	2	-	-	-	2
<u>Dom Bertrand de Cigarral</u>	2	-	-	-	2
<u>Les Coups de l'amour et de la fortune</u>	5	2	-	-	7
<u>Les Visionnaires</u>	8	6	2	2	18
<u>La Mariane</u>	5	2	1	1	9
<u>Les Charmes de Félicie</u>	5	3	-	-	8
<u>Le Désespoir extravagant</u>	5	2	1	-	8
<u>Les Fourberies de Scapin</u>	7	7	3	2	19
<u>Médée</u>	3	-	-	-	3
<u>Le Mariage de rien</u>	4	6	4	2	16
<u>Tamerlan</u>	4	2	-	-	6
<u>Electre*</u>	8	-	-	-	8
<u>La Dame médecin*</u>	15	3	-	-	18
<u>Le Comte d'Essex*</u>	8	3	-	-	11
<u>L'Etourdi</u>	2	8	2	2	14
<u>La Folle gageure</u>		4	-	-	4
<u>Scévole</u>		3	-	-	3
<u>Le Fin/Feint Lourdaud</u>		2	-	-	2
<u>L'Héritier ridicule</u>		6	1	1	8
<u>Le Gouvernement de Sanche Pansa</u>		1	-	-	1
<u>Tite et Bérénice</u>		3	-	-	3
<u>Astrate, roi de Tyr</u>		2	-	-	2
<u>La Dupe amoureuse</u>		5	4	2	11
<u>Andromaque</u>		3	6	1	10
<u>Le Cavalier par amour</u>		5	-	-	5
<u>La Princesse de Clèves</u>		2	-	-	2
<u>Ariane</u>			11	3	14
<u>Bérénice</u>			4	3	7
<u>Le Gentilhomme meunier*</u>			13	3	16
<u>Bajazet</u>			4	1	5
<u>Mithridate</u>			3	1	4
<u>Le Sicilien</u>			10	2	12
<u>Phèdre</u>			6	2	8
<u>Pirame et Thisbé</u>			3	1	4
<u>Camma</u>			2	-	2
<u>La Critique de l'Ecole des femmes</u>			4	1	5
<u>Britannicus</u>			3	2	5
<u>Le Cid</u>			4	3	7
<u>Rodogune</u>			4	2	6
<u>Cinna</u>			3	2	5
<u>Le Fagotier</u>			3	-	3
<u>La Devineresse*</u>			47	-	47
<u>Agamemnon*</u>			14	9	23

	80-1 Total	
<u>La Bassette*</u>	8	8
<u>Héraclius</u>	4	4
<u>Polyeucte</u>	2	2
<u>Les Précieuses ridicules</u>	4	4
<u>Venceslas</u>	2	2
<u>Les Carrosses d'Orléans*</u>	7	7

B. LEAGUE TABLE ACCORDING TO TOTAL NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES PER PLAY

PLAY	AUTHOR	PERFORMANCES
<u>Le Malade imaginaire</u>	Molière	81
<u>Circé*</u>	Thomas Corneille	76
<u>Amphitryon</u>	Molière	47
<u>La Devineresse*</u>	Thomas Corneille	47
<u>L'Inconnu*</u>	Thomas Corneille	47
<u>Tartuffe</u>	Molière	47
<u>Le Bourgeois gentilhomme</u>	Molière	41
<u>L'Avare</u>	Molière	40
<u>Le Comédien poète*</u>	Montfleury and Thomas Corneille	36
<u>George Dandin</u>	Molière	35
<u>Le Cocu imaginaire</u>	Molière	34
<u>Le Misanthrope</u>	Molière	33
<u>L'Ecole des maris</u>	Molière	31
<u>Les Femmes savantes</u>	Molière	31
<u>L'Avocat sans étude</u>	Rosimond	30
<u>Le Festin de pierre*</u>	Thomas Corneille (from Molière)	29
<u>Monsieur de Pourceaugnac</u>	Molière	27
<u>Phèdre et Hippolyte*</u>	Pradon	27
<u>Le Triomphe des dames*</u>	Thomas Corneille	26
<u>La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas</u>	Molière	25
<u>L'Ecole des femmes</u>	Molière	25
<u>Le Mariage forcé</u>	Molière	25
<u>Le Semblable à soi-même</u>	Montfleury	
<u>Agamemnon*</u>	Pader D'Assezan (Boyer)	23
<u>Le Dépit amoureux</u>	Molière	22
<u>L'Amour médecin</u>	Molière	20
<u>Les Fâcheux</u>	Molière	19
<u>Les Fourberies de Scapin</u>	Molière	19
<u>Coriolan*</u>	Abeille	18
<u>La Dame médecin*</u>	Montfleury	18
<u>Les Visionnaires</u>	Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin	18
<u>Dom César d'Avalos*</u>	Thomas Corneille	16
<u>Le Gentilhomme meunier</u>	-	16
<u>Le Mariage de rien</u>	Montfleury	16
<u>L'Ambigu comique</u>	Montfleury	15
<u>Ariane</u>	Thomas Corneille	14
<u>L'Etourdi</u>	Molière	14

<u>Panurge*</u>	Montauban	13
<u>Le Sicilien</u>	Molière	12
<u>Le Comte d'Essex*</u>	Boyer	11
<u>La Dupe amoureuse</u>	Rosimond	11
<u>Germanicus</u>	Boursault	11
<u>Andromaque</u>	Racine	10
<u>Pulchérie</u>	Pierre Corneille	10
<u>La Mariane</u>	Tristan l'Hermite	9
<u>La Mort d'Achilles*</u>	Thomas Corneille	9
<u>Trigaudin*</u>	Montfleury	9
<u>Agrippa, roi d'Albe</u>	Quinault	8
<u>La Bassette*</u>	Champmeslé	8
<u>Les Charmes de Félicie</u>	Montauban	8
<u>Le Désespoir extravagant</u>	Subligny	8
<u>Electre*</u>	Pradon	8
<u>L'Héritier ridicule</u>	Scarron	8
<u>Phèdre</u>	Racine	8
<u>Bérénice</u>	Racine	7
<u>Les Carrosses d'Orléans*</u>	Champmeslé (La Chappelle)	7
<u>Le Cid</u>	Pierre Corneille	7
<u>Les Coups de l'amour et de la fortune</u>	Quinault	7
<u>Iphigénie*</u>	Le Clerc and Coras	7
<u>Rodogune</u>	Pierre Corneille	6
<u>Tamerlan</u>	Pradon	6
<u>Bajazet</u>	Racine	5
<u>Britannicus</u>	Racine	5
<u>Le Cavalier par amour*</u>	Vaumorière	5
<u>Cinna</u>	Pierre Corneille	5
<u>La Critique de l'Ecole des femmes</u>	Molière	5
<u>Le Volontaire*</u>	Rosimond	5
<u>Dom Pasquin d'Avalos</u>	Montfleury	4
<u>La Folle Gageure</u>	Boisrobert	4
<u>Héraclius</u>	Pierre Corneille	4
<u>Mithridate</u>	Racine	4
<u>Pirame et Thisbé</u>	Pradon	4
<u>Les Précieuses ridicules</u>	Molière	4
<u>Le Fagotier</u>	-	3
<u>Médée</u>	Pierre Corneille	3
<u>Scévole</u>	Du Ryer	3
<u>Tite et Bérénice</u>	Pierre Corneille	3

<u>Astrate, roi de Tyr</u>	Quinault	2
<u>Camma</u>	Thomas Corneille	2
<u>La Comtesse d'Orgueil</u>	Thomas Corneille	2
<u>Dom Bertrand de Cigarral</u>	Thomas Corneille	2
<u>Le Fin/Feint Lourdaud</u>	-	
<u>Le Médecin malgré lui</u>	Molière	2
<u>Polyeucte</u>	Pierre Corneille	2
<u>La Princesse de Clèves*</u>	Boursault	2
<u>Venceslas</u>	Rotrou	2
<u>Le Gouvernement de Sanche</u>		
<u>Pansa</u>	Guérin de Bouscal	1

C. LEAGUE TABLE ACCORDING TO TOTAL NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES PER AUTHOR

Molière	639 ²
Thomas Corneille	306 ³
Montfleury	98 ⁴
Rosimond	46
Pradon	45
Racine	39
Pierre Corneille	37
Boyer	34 ⁵
Montauban	21
Abeille	18
Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin	18
Quinault	17
Champmeslé	15 ⁶
Boursault	13
Tristan l'Hermite	9
Scarron	8
Subligny	8
Vaumorière	5
Boisrobert	4
Du Ryer	3
Rotrou	2
Guérin de Bouscal	1

² Plus the twenty-nine performances of Thomas Corneille's verse adaptation of his Dom Juan.

³ Thirty-six of these in collaboration with Montfleury. Including the twenty-nine performances of his verse adaptation of Molière's Dom Juan.

⁴ Thirty-six of these in collaboration with Thomas Corneille.

⁵ Twenty-three of these attributed to Pader d'Assezan in the Registres.

⁶ Seven of these claimed by La Chappelle.

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